

TED M.G. TANEN

Interviewed by: Charles Stuart Kennedy

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Q: Ted, let's start at the beginning. Can you tell me when and where you were born, and something about your family?

TANEN: Alright. I was born in Los Angeles, California, April 1, 1926. My father was a dentist, and my mother a housewife. I was a third generation Californian at that time. My grandmother had come from France on my mother's side, and grandfather had come from Germany. My grandmother, Clara Stone, was a doctor, and I believe the first woman doctor to graduate from the University of Southern California. If not the first, then soon there after. My grandfather went to school as well. My father went to school there, and was a dentist.

Q: USC?

TANEN: USC. My mother had been an undergraduate there. On my father's side, his mother was still alive and he had two sisters. His father had died of the pneumonia epidemic that came after the First World War, so I never knew him. I knew my maternal grandparents fairly well, although they had divorced way before I was born. My grandfather had gone to Mexico to make his fortune, and never came back. My grandmother began a practice in medicine in Los Angeles. At the height of the depression, my father moved the family, my mother, my brother and myself, to a town called Lancaster, California, which is 100 miles north of Los Angeles, in the Mojave Desert. He was the only dentist there for hundreds of miles. It was a small town, and that is actually where I grew up. I should mention, just in passing, that I came down with infantile paralysis in the chest and legs, and was completely paralyzed. It was my maternal grandmother, the M.D., who pulled me through, with what later became known as the Sister Kinney method.

Q: Ah, yes. It's basically exercise...



TANEN: And massage. For years, I had to wear braces, even in Lancaster. I was encouraged to do a lot of horseback riding, which I still do, I might add, on a continual basis, and bicycle riding, and so forth. Whatever happened to me there, with the infantile, did not affect me physically, since I was accepted in 1944 into the V5 program of the Navy. That was the flying thing. I was 17 when I joined, and went off to the University of Arizona.

Q: Well, let's go back to Lancaster. First, is Los Angeles. Los Angeles is so big, what area?

TANEN: It was Lancaster, Montrose. It was up near Pasadena, in that area. My father had a small dental practice there.

Q: Well, let's talk about Lancaster. The only place I know in that area is Calico and Needles.

TANEN: Those are pretty big outfits, compared to Lancaster. Lancaster, I have to say, made a tremendous impression upon me. This was during the Depression, although we didn't really realize it was the Depression. I didn't realize it was the Depression, and how bad things were. It was a town of about 1,000 at that point. I think that included every dog, cat, and whatever. It was also a very international community. There were a lot of Greeks living there, and a lot of Spaniards, Basques. It was a farming community, and it was a western community. Q: Sheep herding if you are Basque?.

TANEN: Yes, sheep herding there. We had one movie theater, and the owner/runner of it, was a guy by the name of Gump, and his daughter was Judy Gump, who became Judy Garland.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

TANEN: It was a usual western kind of town, which few people these days, even heard about. It was just in the movies. They had the waterfront, which was a series of bars, with hitching posts, where the cowboys would come in on Saturday night. The big deal was the train coming in from LA, or coming through. There was one hotel. It was really small stuff. The main thing to me was that there were all these different kinds of people, from Britain, from Germany, from various countries. While they might have been cliquish, they weren't. So, I got to know a lot of different kinds of people.

Q: Well, were you seeing evidence of the exodus of the dustbowl, the Oakies, the Arkies, and all that?



TANEN: Yes, two things happened while I was there. You are hitting all the important questions.

Q: Well, I grew up as a kid in South Pasadena, San Marino. I was born in 1928.

TANEN: I was in a very small grammar school. I still remember the principal's name, Miss Nelson. Suddenly, what came into town were these great long lines of Model-Ts and trucks, and poor Oklahomans, starving. They were resented by the townspeople, very, very badly. I might add that there were a few Japanese who were in this community, which comes to another point later. They camped outside of town, where my father had received, as a dental payment, some 20 acres of land, and where we had built a horse barn, and a house. But, these people then came to school. I had never seen anything like it. The clothing was just in shreds. They were eating soda crackers. That was lunch. For those of us who didn't even know there was a depression, this was quite something to see. But, I think the thing I was aware of was the resentment... not on the part of my parents, necessarily, but on the part of a lot of townspeople against these people.

The other thing that happened there in my very young youth was that WWII began. By this time, I was a freshman in Antelope Valley Joint Union High School, which had 600 students, from 80 miles around. The British were sending in very young people to be trained as pilots. They were given probably 12 hours of flight instruction in our local airport, by all kinds of people, and then sent back for the Battle of Britain. Of course, what this did to the young female population in our town was spectacular. Very few of these people lived. We would hear later that practically the whole class was wiped out in the Battle of Britain. So, the war became very important to us in that area. The other thing that happened concerned my father and his partner, a man named Gaskell. Gaskell was in his seventies when I knew him, and my father was in his late thirties, early forties. Gaskell was a direct descendant of a Revolutionary War soldier. He had had a child late in life. That child had been in the Civil War, and he had a child late in life. Then, there was Gaskell, so three generations. I actually knew somebody who had fought in the Revolutionary War, or we had his ancestor in the Revolutionary War.

It was a very patriotic town, as you must remember from your own experiences. We had a flagpole in the yard. My father had been in WWII. The American Legion was a very hot item. There were meetings there, and also at Veterans of Foreign Wars, and other similar organizations. The notion that this war was something to be taken seriously was very much evident, even before we got into it. At that time, we had a man working on our very small 20 acre horse ranch who was from Holland. He left Holland because of the Nazis. This man instilled in me that if I didn't get into the service and start killing Germans very soon, he was going to kill me. He was so patriotic. In other words, you couldn't get away from the war, and we weren't even in it yet.



Q: Well, how about, during this period, late 1930s and all, did American politics intrude, around the dinner table? I recall that when I was a kid in San Marino and South Pasadena, particularly San Marino, they were very Republican. I used to get into fights, because my mother was an ardent democrat, and supported Roosevelt. As kids, we used to get into fights over this thing. Did you find yourself in this?

TANEN: Well, Roosevelt in our family was a hero. So, if there were any Republicans in Lancaster, I don't remember them. I do remember the fact that when Pearl Harbor came, our Japanese classmates were suddenly rounded up and sent, for all intents and purposes, to concentration camps, with their families. This was a tough nut.

Q: How did this sit with the people?

TANEN: I think they tried to support the Japanese. There weren't that many. There couldn't have been more than three or four. These Japanese had been members of the community. They had been on the Kiwanis, and all these organizations. I know that in some cases, the people couldn't wait to take over the land and say goodbye to the Japanese. But, I certainly had no feeling of that. I was still very young, but I didn't have that feeling. One of the sidelights of all of this was... and remember, you are going to hear this ad nauseam, because I'm a horse nut. I'm one of the great bores in the world with horses. We had been sending some of our mares to Pomona to be bred to what they call remount stallions for the American cavalry. With Pearl Harbor, even in Lancaster, a far piece from the sea, we were expecting submarines and Japanese at any minute. I bet you had this as well. They set up these air raid things, where my mother would go sit in the tower and I would sometimes sit up there with her. You would say that there is a plane flying east, west, north, up.

Q: You would call The Central?



TANEN: You would call The Central. Oh, my mother didn't know one airplane from another, so she had a big time with that. The other thing was because of our horses and other people's horses there, they formed a small, sort of cavalry station. They brought in a couple remount sergeants, and they took some of our horses, and they took of other people's horses. They trained us for a couple weeks to go out and get ready to repel the Japanese, who were due to cross the Mojave Desert at any moment. Well, there were some pretty interesting experiences because of that. Our horses were unbroken and caused considerable damage to our riders, including my father and me. You knew there was a war, and you were going to be part of it. Then, of course, the draft had begun, and people were going. It was a question of time. I'm trying to think if there is anything else about Lancaster I could tell you. It was not a rich town; it was alfalfa and farming. It was before they discovered deep wells, so there wasn't much water at that time. Of course, now, it's a town of 200,000.

Q: Well, what about in grammar school and high school, what were your academic interests, reading. Were there any books you liked?

TANEN: My favorite books at that point were by the author Will James, who was a westerner... Smoky, and all that. It was a very interesting school system in that, while it was small, not filled with great intellect, it pushed certain things. I remember reading in school, Les Miserables, reading a lot of the classics, and enjoying them very, very much. So, there was a lot of that stimulation.

Q: How about the dustbowl refugees? Were they beginning to get absorbed in the community? TANEN: Not for a couple years. Eventually, of course, they became very much involved. They built their own town out of Lancaster. It was a shanty town. If you had friends and relatives coming from other places, you would have to go out and show them how the Oakies were living. It was quite something to see. Once the Depression was finished and so forth, these people were integrated. I assume they are now proud landowners, doctors and lawyers. At the time, I can remember, for a year or two at any rate, there was considerable resentment.

Q: Were there any war industries set up, other than remounts?

TANEN: Yes. As part of the family laurel as well, because Nyroc dry lakes, which is now Edwards Air Force Base, was set up there as a training ground. There was a woman whom my father knew very well... I remember they bought a stallion once for breeding purposes, and it was Poncho Barnes.



Q: Oh, yes, Poncho Barnes. To the reader of this, read *The Right Stuff*, Tom Wolfe. She is a major figure, and quite a horsewoman, too.

TANEN: Quite a horsewoman and always with a different guy, a cowboy. Whether she ran a whore house or whether this was just a good bar, I don't know, and I really don't care. My father and I used to go out there once in a while, in later years. Of course, this was after Chuck Yeager came back from England. He was out there, and I got to see a lot of those people, and aviation was very important. Believe you me, it had nothing to do with what happened later. It was just a very dry, wide spot in the road.

Q: At this time, were you getting this massage treatment?

TANEN: I had infantile paralysis when I was about six or seven. I remember wearing high shoes in Lancaster, and maybe braces for a year. This was in the early 1930s, I suppose. Then, my legs seemed to be alright, especially for bicycling, and one thing or another. So, there were no residual effects. It was a miracle.

Q: Of course, it's hard for the generation now to understand the horror that went on every summer with polio. You weren't quite sure where it was. There were people concerned about going to public pools, movies. Did movies play much of a role in your life?

TANEN: Every Saturday, with all the guys, sitting in the front row, with Tom Mix, Buck Jones, Roy Rogers, the serials, and the newsreels of the war. That was our big Saturday afternoon, to go to the movies. Later on, in high school, I was an usher at the theater.

Q: Did you have to try to calm down the little boys, and keep them from throwing things?

TANEN: Oh, screaming, yelling, fighting, and everything going on that you could possibly imagine. It was a good place to grow up. My brother, who was five years younger than I, has entirely different feelings about the place. There was a period when it was good, and then I guess things began to change, when the town began to grow, during the war. My leaving at 17, I guess, was crucial and wise.

Q: Was it the fact you had Muroc aiming you toward the Air Force?

TANEN: I think I was one of those who, in addition to horses, had a room full of model airplanes. I can still remember some of those great models.



Q: Balsa wood.

TANEN: Balsa wood, covered in paint. I would line them up and watch, then crash them. As a young man airplanes were important to me. I had never flown, but they were very important.

Q: Well, how did this program work? When did you go in, and what did you do?

TANEN: You mean, when I left to go into the Navy?

Q: Yes.

TANEN: Well, as I said, this is 1944. I was about to turn 18. There was no way I was going to be allowed to be drafted, and I mean, my father and the town... I went into what they call the Navy V5 program. I joined it in Los Angeles. I was so young, and I hadn't even graduated from high school. I never graduated from anything, because I was always someplace else during graduation. But, in high school, my father was one of those who went up on the stage and took my diploma, because I was already in the Navy. So, I went to V5.

Q: V5 was Navy?

TANEN: Navy air. I thought I was going to be looking at airplanes almost immediately. Of course, I got there, and found out that because of the Battle of Midway, they didn't need pilots so much anymore. I was so young and stupid, and the thing to do was go to school. I was expected to go to school for two years, and then they would see what they would do with me. I was motivated for a while, and then I became less motivated. I was not a very good student, particularly in Mathematics. After about a year and a half, I was let go by the V5 program, which had, by then, turned into V12. The war was closing down, and I had hoped to see some kind of action, which I never did. I was assigned to radar school, and then assigned to a seaplane tender. We did some cruising in the Plautians, and around in that area, for six months, and then I was released. So, that was the story of my great war career. Everybody tells me how lucky I was, and I know damn well I was lucky.

Q: Well, you got out in 1946?

TANEN: 1946. I think it was June 1946.



Q: Where did you go then?

TANEN: I went back to Lancaster and tried to figure out what to do. My father had hoped I would become a dentist or a doctor. By then, my grandmother was dead. I didn't really have any direction. I went to UCLA for a while, and finally in 1949 got a baccalaureate's degree from there, in political science, but I was not a great student, to put it mildly. On a whim, I went for an interview at the University of Southern California, because I still had money left over from my GI bill, and there were no jobs around. I happened to meet a guy named Ross Burkes, who had been in the Foreign Service, and actually had been in India. He was head of the department. We talked for a while, and he suggested I join his graduate school, a masters, or maybe a Ph.D., in international relations. Since this was my family's alma mater, this appealed to me, and it appealed to me especially since I didn't know what to do with myself. But, there I was a straight A student. For the year and a half, or two years I was there, I was at the top of my class. I finally found something of interest.

Q: What was this? What were you studying?

TANEN: At USC?

Q: Yes.

TANEN: It was basically international relations and political science, but I took courses that I still remember... I did a thesis on Canada and the organization of American states (OAS), for example. I did, at that point, speak some Spanish, so I could correspond with my maternal grandfather, from time to time, who, by that time, had lost his English. There were courses on the United Nations. There were courses on basically Latin America, and I became fascinated with the whole idea of international relations, and what made things work. This was because of the professors, Paul Hadley, and Ross Burkes. It was also because of the students. It was a very small group, in the graduate class, and they were all pointed toward the Foreign Service, one sector or another, not necessarily FSO. Some of them were foreigners. I remember some Lebanese who were there, for example. They were going back to be in their Foreign Service. Ted Trembly, who joined the Foreign Service, and Kurt Moore, who was killed in Sudan, these were close friends of mine. It was too late to take the FSO exam, but we had a recruiter come through from the Department of State. The recruiter's name was Justin Lightsee, I think. Anyhow, Justin came through and said, "Why don't you come in as a clerk, an FSS, and then see where you go from there. That way, you can go in right now. We will take you next week."

Q: You didn't get your MA, though?



TANEN: I did get my MA.

Q: You did. This is just after you got it.

TANEN: Yes, this was right after. I got my MA in 1951. Since everybody else, my whole class, eight people, were going to Washington, I hopped on the band wagon, and came in as FSS-13, and went to Washington. You talk about Foreign Service Institute and what it was all about then. New State had just opened, but I'm not sure it was operational.

Q: No, it hadn't.

TANEN: Well, it was there. But, you still had the old State Department building. You had those little buildings all over town.

Q: Yes. The FSI was in an apartment house.

TANEN: You had to go there for cashing your checks and everything else. So, there we all were. We used to meet at the Willard every Wednesday night and talk about what we were doing. Some of these guys were CIA guys, some of them were going to the Department of Defense Foreign Service, others were FSOs, two or three, there were three or four of us who were FSSs. It became a clique in Washington. I think there were a lot of them at that particular point, because I can remember the Willard always had a table set up for this group, or that group. Ross Burkes used to come out from Southern California to talk to us and see how we were all doing. Later on, Ross had a map in his office, and he had pins where all of us were stationed through the years.

Q: That's very interesting. What did they have you doing when you came in in 1951?

TANEN: Well, I went in, and I was sworn in. There were pictures of people on the walls who had started as FS-13s, and now had become ambassadors. There were also others there. There were those who had been hired in Moscow. Chip Bohlen, and so forth, were regular FSOs, but others were hired as FSSs, and then became FSRs or FSOs, later on, from that same era. Without conscientiously thinking about it, I could see I wouldn't have to be an FSS for the rest of my life, no matter what happened. I was assigned to the code room, and I became a code clerk. Within a very short time, I was sent to Burma.

Q: You were in Burma from when to when?



TANEN: I was in Burma from March 1951 until about June 1953, something like that. By some quirk of fate, Burma was, and remains to this day, the best post. It was small. I lasted in the code clerk room about three weeks. I was immediately taken out of the job and assigned administrative work. When you are at a post of that size, it didn't make any difference what your rank was.

Q: Absolutely not.

TANEN: Our ambassador was David McHenry Key, who was one of the most outstanding diplomats I ever worked for. It was the first time I had ever flown on a commercial plane; I had flown putt-putt planes with the Navy. We took a Boeing strata cruiser. It took us four days to get to Rangoon, and you slept on those damn things. They had a bunk area. On arrival, I was asked if I played canasta, whoever it was meeting me at the airport, and I said, "Yes," pinochle I guess it was, and I said, "Yes, in my fraternity house, I was known as the great pinochle player." He said, "The ambassador therefore invites you to dinner tonight, to play as his partner against the military attaché ½..." We didn't have DCMs in those days. I forget now what they were called, but Henry Day was the number two in the embassy, and the military attaché ½, whatever he was. He said, "Are you willing to do this?" I said, "Sure," not knowing what I was supposed to say or do, or anything else. I reported in, checked in, and that night, ended up at the ambassador's residence. We had dinner and played. We won, so from then on, I was an insider. But, prior to all of this, because I was still waltzing around in Los Angeles, trying to figure out what I wanted to do with my life, I had, in a moment of weakness, decided that maybe I would go back in the Navy. So, I signed up to go take a Navy course, and graduate as an officer, and then Korea came. The same week that I was sent to Burma, I received orders to report aboard a Destroyer to go to Korea. I decided to ignore those orders and went to Rangoon instead. So, I sat with the military attaché ½ that night and said, "I've got a small problem, I'm a deserter, some two, three weeks standing, and I don't know what to do about it, but I ain't going back in the Navy." He said, "Well, let me see what I can do." He got me out of that mess, thanks to our canasta game.

Although we lived in a compound in Rangoon, we were in the community, we were in the Burmese diplomatic community. We were invited to everything. I shared a house with two other bachelors. It became known as the place to go, and we had Burmese over to our house night after night, including high-ranking diplomats, military officers, everything else. McHenry Key and Henry Day encouraged us to do this.

Q: Well, what was the situation in Burma at this time?



TANEN: The situation in Burma at this time was really complicated because you had about five or six communist groups, red flag, white flag, black flag, pink flag, I don't know what else. They were all fighting the Burmese, who were the minority in Burma. The cabinet had been assassinated a few years earlier, I think in 1947 or 1948. The prime minister at that time was assassinated along with all the people. It is his daughter now who is in Rangoon.

Q: Aung San Suu Kyi.

TANEN: Yes.

Q: Who won the Nobel prize.

TANEN: Yes, who is now trying to get Burma to come around again. Uno was a very distinguished prime minister who had what they call the 30 comrades, young Burmese officers trained by the British, who had then gone to Japan, and set up camp there and became supporters of what Japan was trying to do. Then, they found out that Japan was not about to give them their independence any more than the British were, so they then turned both ways. So, we met a lot of those people, including the one who took over the government and became their dictator. Anyhow, we met Thant, who used to come to our house and dance the Virginia reel. Travel in the country was very, very difficult. The city of Rangoon was surrounded, and the water was cut off once or twice a week by one group or another. In addition to all the communists, you had the Kachins, the Chins, the this, the that, everybody was fighting everybody. To make the situation even more complicated, you had the KMT, and General NeWin (head of KMT).

Q: Also, Chiang Kai-shek.

TANEN: Came across the border, set up camp.

Q: They were left over from the Stilwell campaign.



TANEN: That's right. I can't remember the general's name who was in charge of them. He later became the head of what they call "The Golden Triangle." In other words, they went into the opium business. The complications, the fighting, the CIA station chief was a Colonel, who is still alive, by the way, and is living in Honolulu, I think. I saw him on television. He won the iron man contest two or three years ago. I knew nothing about what the CIA was doing. After all, in my position, I didn't know what was going on, except when I worked in the code room, sometimes I would hear things. But, it was obvious the Americans were supporting the KMT, and that our embassy was involved. At that particular time, we had an air attaché<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> and a plane, DC3.

I was at a party one night and the public affairs officer came up me and said, "Would you mind working in our cultural affairs office?" I said, "Fine." They cleared it with Washington, and that finally worked. So, I was on the Fulbright committee and everything. We would have our Fulbright meetings in various places. We would always fly up by these planes. We went also by boat, and we went to different places. One of the things that finally brought everything to a head was that the Burmese claimed that there were Americans fighting with the KMT, fighting against the Burmese troops. The story went that our ambassador Key had been told by Washington and was told it was not true. At which point, the Burmese said, "Okay," and they brought down a couple bodies with American passports, and said, "What is this?" Key felt he had been lied to, and he resigned immediately. He came back to Washington. It was a pretty traumatic moment in the embassy itself when all of this happened.

We then got a new ambassador who had been on MacArthur's staff, a general named Seabald. He followed a much harder line, and he was much stricter as far as the staff was concerned. He felt that people of my rank shouldn't be entertaining people who outranked them. It was the first time I had run into it, but it certainly wasn't the last. He and the new DCM, a man named Brown, tried to stop all of this, but the Burmese and other members of the diplomatic corps were not paying any attention. Life went on pretty much as it had before. What I am saying is that not only did I have a relationship with the Burmese, I was part of the scene there. I met some of the most remarkable officers of our Foreign Service. They took me in as though I were a son. I was pretty young. I don't know how many of these people you had on your program, but Skipper Purnell, was a political officer, Henry Day, of course, was a tremendous man. I think we called him Executive Officer. Webster was an admin. officer, the military people, all of them. We were one family, and it was a hell of a family.

Q: This is the thing. It can happen in a small post. I think a military man coming in as a general, particularly coming from that MacArthur atmosphere, would be very uncomfortable with this.

TANEN: The Ambassador was extremely uncomfortable with this.



Q: Well, you were mentioning the Americans getting involved there, I know from talking to other people who were involved in elsewhere, the CIA was very active in the area. Bob Dillon was there, I think Jim Ruley. They were having young officers going out with what we call "Taiwanese or KNT" troops, raiding the Chinese coast and all this. I guess this was probably an offshoot.

TANEN: Definitely. I did go on a couple of flights just because of my interest in flying. We flew over to see if they were still there, and they were still there.

Q: Did you pick up any concerns at this time, 1951 to 1953, about where Burma was going? With what the KMT was doing, there was no particular chance of their taking over the government.

TANEN: No, but government was so unstable and shaky because of everything else that was going on. Did I get any feeling of what was going to happen? Not really, not the way it did happen. That Uno couldn't stay forever was quite obvious. That you would have a military coup; that was the end of democracy, and still is the end of democracy. You felt that there was enough stability there. At least, I felt there was, in my naivete. That there was enough stability there that the government could still continue, one way or another, to hold itself together. I think the embassy as a whole felt that way too. I'm trying to remember, what we are talking about was many years ago.

Q: During this period of time, 1951 to 1953, did McCarthyism reach out and hit any of you?

TANEN: Yes. Now, let's see, when did I really run into it. I guess it was obvious it was there. Our chief political officer had been a China officer and was under suspicion, a very wonderful man. We talked about it considerably: who lost China, what was McCarthy doing? But it didn't really hit home. I'll tell you when it did hit home. I went in 1953, back to Washington, by that time, I think there wasn't a USIA, it was being formed. After all, USIA was something that happened later on in life. So, I was getting drawn into USIA because of my cultural experience in Burma. At the end of my tour in Burma, I went back to Washington and became a regular cultural officer.

Q: Had you taken an exam?



TANEN: No, I still hadn't taken any exam, but by this time, I think I had been made an FSR. I can't remember anymore. I was asked to go through Paris in 1953 on my way to Laos. I can't remember when that happened. It may have happened when I was going to Burma. I ended up in Paris with Cohen and Shine.

Q: They were making their infamous tour of Europe. These are Senator McCarthy's hatchet kids. You couldn't really call them men.

TANEN: They were ugly, awful. As a matter of fact, I was on the plane with them when they arrived in Paris. That's why I'm having trouble on the timing of all of this, because I know when I went to Laos, I went by ship. So, it had to have been while I was in Burma, that I ended up going to Paris for some reason. They went through the library there; burning books. I thought, "This is Hitler. This is no different than anything else." They tore the place apart. That whole embassy was in shambles in Paris when I went through. I felt so strongly about what I was seeing that I felt that if the United States can survive this, it can survive anything. This was the worst thing I had ever seen. By that time, I was home on leave, and listened to the garbage on television, radio, reading the newspapers, watching what was going on. It was pretty discouraging for us, even though we were very low on the totem pool, and seeing what it was doing to some of our senior officers, seeing what was going on in the Foreign Service as a whole. This business of service in China, and all of this, and blaming the fall of China as though it was ours to lose. All of this was taking place in Burma. It certainly affected my feeling toward the United States and what was going on, and in relation to the Foreign Service. I think that is another reason we clung to one another, even though I was not much to cling to. I was at least there, and sympathetic, or whatever, and watching what was going on, which was just horrendous. If you could have seen what they were doing to our library, taking books off the shelves, Hemingway, for crying out loud, For Whom the Bell Tolls, all these things, and throwing them into the furnace. They claimed these were all communists. There was no talking to these people. There was no way you could have a conversation. So, Laos was a whole different category.

Q: You were there from when to when?



TANEN: I arrived in the spring of 1953, and I left in the spring or summer of 1955. Laos was a Legation, not an embassy. Cambodia was a Legation. Donald Heath was our Ambassador in Saigon. Saigon, and all of these places, were French beyond belief. To arrive in Laos from Burma was quite shattering. Laos was a one-horse town, no paved roads. The Legation was this big house on the Mekong. The chargé d'affaires was Mike Rives. He must have been about 30 then. Then, there was me, assigned as public affairs officer and his number two. There was a woman named Nan McKay; they used to call her Stem rep. McKay, because she represented Stem, which was AID at that particular time. She lived down the road in a house by herself. We had this big, big house with no electricity, except for a generator, which we put on at night. All the gasoline was brought up the river by jerry cans. The only way of getting in and out of there was through CAT, the old China Air.

Q: China Air, yes.

TANEN: Which later became other things. We had our favorite pilots, earthquake McGoon, and Gene Gable, and some of these guys who were killed out there later on, and became quite well known.

To arrive in Vientiane, and speaking practically no French, and reporting to Mike, who spoke fluent French, and came from a background which was about 180 degrees from mine. He was from a well-known Newport family, and quite wealthy. Everybody in Washington was convinced we were going to hate one another. What we ended up doing was becoming the greatest friends you could possibly have. There was another American named George. He was the pilot to Prince Souvanna Phouma. He had a little putt-putt airplane. That was your American community. We reported directly to the ambassador in Saigon.

Q: Now, let's talk a bit about Donald Heath. How did you find him at the time? Was he a presence, at all?



TANEN: Yes, he was a strong presence, and he was a good presence. He was very supportive. I don't remember him ever coming to Vientiane, but he sent up others, a DCM would come up, or the military attaché, or the first secretary, whatever they were. I guess you have to recall that in those days whatever we did, we didn't want to hurt France's feelings. This was a carryover from the second world war. The department, I think, was still very strong in its feelings toward France. There was a feeling that Vietnam should remain French. The earlier feelings that Ho Chi Min, and so forth, wanted independence, seemed to have been pushed aside. What you were dealing with was something which was neither here nor there. In Vientiane, you had a large French legation, a distinguished minister. You had a very large military presence. You had everything that goes with that, including the whore house next door to the American legation. Almost anything we did, we would have to make sure we talked to the French about it. If we were going to call on somebody, at least the French had to know about it.

Q: You were there during the fall of Dien Bien Phu.

TANEN: Yes.

Q: This is when the French basically lost out in Vietnam.

TANEN: Let me try to set the stage. Soon after I got there in 1953 - after all, there were the two of us - I was asked to do some political reporting and Voice of America needed some feed as well. What I suddenly found myself doing, and I must admit, was great. You took your jeep from Vientiane and you drove to Kadoona, 10 or 15 kilometers down the road. There you were met by a pirogue.

Q: This is a small, dugout canoe.

TANEN: A small, dugout canoe. I'm alone, by the way. Mike is not with me. They would row me across the river, and then I would find myself being met by a Thai army jeep. The Thai army jeep drove me another 10 or 15 kilometers, inland, to a place called Udorn. There was the United States Air Force in all its glory. Now, this is 1953. I would then go up. They had Dakotas, that is all they had.

Q: Dakotas being a DC3.



TANEN: I would fly with them. They were dropping supplies to a place called Sanyo, which was southeast, northwest, which was the big Vietnamese-Laotian army depot, French actually. You were carrying supplies to those, because they were always fighting. The kind of supplies that were being carried was mainly barbed wire, but also a lot of medical things, food, other things. They would throw it out of the planes, and turn around and go back. This was political reporting. So I was reporting through Mike to the embassy on how this was going, and were there any ripples, were there any problems. Then, the Dien Bien Phu business got started. So, then it was not only flying out of Udorn, and throwing stuff to the French in various parts, we were then throwing barbed wire and so forth out the door at Dien Bien Phu. I don't think any of us, at that particular point, expected this to be the turning point in the war. At least I certainly didn't get that feeling. But, with the fall of Dien Bien Phu, I was suddenly asked to go to Luong Prabong, and do a first-hand report on the evacuation of the first wounded coming out of Luong Prabong. So, I flew up there; Luong Prabong being the royal capital of Laos. I saw them helicoptering the wounded out of Dien Bien Phu, loading them onto Dakotas, and flying them off to France, or wherever they were flying. I also met most of the colonels who ended up in Algeria, later on.

Q: Salaam, and all those.

TANEN: They were all there. So, then what you had was a peculiar situation where it was no longer going to be a small group in Laos reporting to Donald Heath. You suddenly found you were an independent legation, and within a very short time, we had Charles Yost arriving with his family, wife, daughter, and two sons. Charles was 42 years old and an FS0-2, and again, the absolutely ideal man, a first-rate guy. We were on the map. Within weeks, if not hours of Charles arriving, we had orders to start finding other housing, and that meant building housing. You had John Foster Dulles flying in, and the story goes, and it happened to be true, that he couldn't land if his plane on the airstrip in Vientiane because of a water buffalo. I was named country public affairs officer, so I was the member of the country team, and I stayed. Mike was named political officer, a man named Paul Paddock was named DCM, Ted Coburn came in as CIA. All of this was in weeks of this whole thing. Then, you had the influx of AID, like you have never seen in your life. The head of AID had his Cadillac flown in. There's a book that has been written about all this. You had a guy by the name of Moore who was number two, and he has written this book. I remember sitting down at the luncheon table with Charles Yost and the country team, and Dulles, and listening to Dulles about just what the hell this all means, and the domino theory. While I was sitting there, it was the first time I began to think, "This is Laos, I don't know what you are talking about. This is not a big, powerful country."

Q: As public affairs officer, what were you doing?



TANEN: As public affairs officer, my job was to feed stories into the Voice of America, to work with school children there, and to get materials out to them, to work in the cultural sphere and actually set up a center there, which we did. Suddenly, I found myself in the position where I had no budget. I was told to go to Bangkok, and buy whatever I wanted; trucks, jeeps, the works. They said, "Whatever it costs, spend the money, and have them sent." Suddenly, I ended up with an information officer, a cultural officer, this that and the other. Suddenly, I was staffed with four or five people. It was mainly showing films, and it was mainly back up for AID.

Q: Well, how did you find dealing with the Laotians, both the government people and those outside the government?

TANEN: Laotians, Cambodians and Vietnamese, if you are talking about at a lower level, they were about as different from the Burmese as you could get. They were not open. They are shy people. As far as the upper echelon, they were very French. They all studied in France. They were very sophisticated. I got to know Prince Souvanna Phouma a little bit, and his wife, a Vietnamese. I got to know an awful lot of them, but they suddenly had become important, and they were beginning to play the Americans against the French to see what they could get. Of course, for the French, their worst fears were coming true, the Americans were taking over. This drove them wild.

Q: It sure did.

TANEN: And yet, one of the things I brought pictures of here is soon after Charles Yost's arrival, we had to present credentials to the King. Well, this was quite an ordeal. You had to fly in the DC3, up to the Luong Prabong. You got into your white dinner jacket, and you crossed the river in a pirogue, where you were met by the car of the king's palace. Then, you were driven to the palace, and you did your credential thing, and then there was a lunch, and dancing, and all of the things. Then back to Vientiane and working. The whole thing was becoming unreal. Our embassy was set up with just that one building, and we had a tent up in front, and all of us were given houses. I had the marine guards based in my house, for example. We suddenly had what they call "white city." They flew in housing from Japan, Dyonset housing, complete with generators, so they all could have air conditioning. Remember, three people, three years later, and when I left, there were hundreds of people there.

Q: Well, you know, the French get upset anytime you talk about any culture other than French culture. Here, they had been doing all this, and suddenly you were introducing English, and all this. Were you finding yourself running against the French mafia, the equivalent? Or, did you find the French were thinking "Oh, the hell with this, let's just get out of here?"



TANEN: There was a lot of that. There was a lot of confusion, and I had the feeling that maybe it's better if you do it. We had the resentment all this time, I can remember an awful lot of it. But, everything we did had to be in French. If we were setting up the library, you better had some French books in French. If you had films, and I don't know how many films we made, because we had our own film unit, shooting AID projects, feeding the starving, and so forth, was in French or Laotian, but basically French, because you were reaching the people who would speak French. In a way, it was still a French culture, which is going to lead me up to something else later on, because what I ended up doing when I got out of the Foreign Service - I'm skipping a lot - and what I thought about in my later years in the Foreign Service was how the French use culture as a political tool. There are some things about the United States which doesn't like this. We don't like to use our culture as a political tool. We don't think of them in that way. Yet, it is as much a political tool, in my view, as a lot of the other things that we've done. If you can reach people through writing, through language, through films, through this, that and the other thing, in English, that is a political tool. The French knew this.

Q: At the time of Dien Bien Phu and the surrender there, were you feeling, from your French contact, resentment that we hadn't gone in?

TANEN: Yes, tremendous resentment. We ended up sending them fighter planes from our base in Vientiane. Oh, maybe fighter planes which were turned over to the French, but it was already down to hell there. That we could have done more to have helped them in that way, there was tremendous resentment on the part of the French.

Q: Did you sense a shift of the Laotians looking at this and saying, "The French's day is over, and now the Americans day has come in?"

TANEN: Yup, money talks, and AID did it. Suddenly, there were cars, and suddenly there were paved roads, suddenly the school teacher from a small town was made general of the army, suddenly he ended up absconding with funds and going to Bangkok. Suddenly, you had all kinds of Laotians troops being trained. They were being trained, and there were American advisors, and things of that nature. I just happened to meet the French intelligence because there were two young guys who ran what they call the British American tobacco company's office, outside of Vientiane. Because they were all bachelors, I got to know these guys fairly well. But, that was your sensor of French intelligence in that place.

Q: Did you have the feeling the French were paying pretty close attention to what we were doing?

TANEN: Oh, I knew they were writing me up like crazy, as well as all the rest of us.



Q: When AID comes in like this, the people they are bringing in are not sophisticated Foreign Service types. These are people who can see to making good roads, and doing things like this. Was there a problem in bringing this rather hard-charging outfit into what I understand was a fairly laid back society?

TANEN: Yes. You suddenly had more problems than you really wanted. They wanted food brought in. You had to have a PX kind of a thing. You couldn't use the local market. They had to have air conditioning. They had to have their cars. They had to have schools for their children. The Laotians were looking at this and they would comment on it, "What are you doing? What is going on here?" So, you would try to explain, through my office, through films, that this was an attempt to help Laos fight communism headed by Prince Souvanna Poum's half-brother.

Q: Half-brother.

TANEN: Half-brother was the head of the Pathet Laos fighting in the south. You had the old king who was really so old and decrepit he didn't know what was going on. His son was trying to keep things going. What you found was they were turning more and more to the Americans, and looking for the Americans to help them out of a situation that they didn't know how to get out of themselves.

Q: How did you find Mike Reeves?

TANEN: Very thorough. His French was impeccable, and with a good sense of humor. God knows you needed it there. For me, he was and still is a little stiff. That is what he is. I found him to be a good man to work with. He was better at working with the French than he was with the Laotians, but with the upper echelon Laotians, he was very good as well.

Q: How about Charlie Yost? TANEN: Charles Yost was one of the greats in our Foreign Service. I think he too had reservations about moving in so quickly and so heavily into Laos. But, he weighed everything carefully. He was so laid back that he fit right in with the Laotians very, very well.

Q: Were you getting high-powered people from Washington coming in?



TANEN: Oh, one right after another, and Congressmen, and newspaper people. One day I was driving along the Mekong River, trying to clear my head, I guess. I saw a man, an American, obviously, walking along the Mekong River. I stopped and said, "Can I help you?" He said, "Yes, my name is Joe Alsop." He had come across by pirogue from Thailand. So, I took him to the legation.

Q: Famous newspaper man, or political perim, I guess you would call him.

TANEN: Stewart Alsop. Joe used to have that column. Joe was, of course, very much a political animal. But, they were all coming through. People would come from Hong Kong, all over Asia. Everybody was coming through. I keep forgetting to mention that we opened up our Legation, but the British suddenly had a Legation opening up, and Lord deMalydi, as I recall, was their minister and then you had Japanese. Then, you also had the International Commission coming in, which was made up of... what was it, the "fold," the Indians, Poles, Canadians?

Q: The Indians and the Canadians.

TANEN: And the Canadians, they had an office there. They were running around, all over the place, trying to stop the fighting, and to supervise what was going on. We became an international community. Then, I went back to Washington, and I was to be debriefed, I remember. I walked in, and what everybody wanted me to say was how we were stopping communism in southeast Asia. I said, "I don't know whether we are stopping communism in southeast Asia. All I know is you have the biggest mess out there of Americans that I have ever seen in my life, and I, under 30 years old, cannot tell you why. I don't understand it." At the same time, we had another group come through Laos, made up of brigadier generals and colonels, and admirals, one thing or another, asking "How deeply should we get involved in Vietnam?" So, they went to the three countries, and Laos got them. I got to know one of the colonels later. He became our air attaché in Budapest. They were very much against American involvement. They felt it was a losing situation there. So, they were going back to Washington to say, "Whatever you do, stay out of this mess. If you want to have aid, or one thing or another, that's okay, but don't get involved militarily." That is what I was told they would say, but I don't know what they really said.

Q: Well, I think at one point, maybe a little later on, the politicians were talking about, "Well, maybe we should put a lot of troops in here," and the military was saying, "For God sakes, you would have to supply everybody by air, there is no other way of getting stuff there, it just isn't feasible."



TANEN: It was unreal.

Q: How about the CIA? How were our relations with the CIA? Were they sort of doing their thing?

TANEN: Our relationship with the CIA got off to a very bad start. Ted Coburn was our first CIA agent, and he stayed, but he had other people over him, station chiefs and so forth. I should mention that when we were all still living in the Legation building, before we all had our own houses, the toilet was our code room. You used to sit on the toilet and do the OTP, one time pass. Suddenly, Mike discovered that Coburn was writing reports on us, which drove him right up the wall. So, we notified Washington, and I think Coburn got slapped on the wrist, but we felt that if he is here to report on something, he should be reporting on the political situations, and not on the staff, the two of us, and the AID one or two people. There was a good deal of hard feeling there between us all, and it didn't get a hell of a lot better when the new station chief got there. There was some resentment. I think part of the resentment was that people were trying to make something out of Laos, which it wasn't. Those of us who had served there, who knew enough of the Laotians, felt that these other people were being taken advantage of, to get money, to get supplies, to get power. It was an unhealthy situation. These people really didn't understand that Laos, no matter how important it had become in official eyes, it was still back water in a very small hick town, in a hick civilization, if you will. It may have had a thousand years of kings, but it was nothing to be afraid of, to worry about.

Q: I guess people were looking at the map. This was, of course, part of the whole Vietnamese mess, of translating it into something that it wasn't.

TANEN: There's another interesting sideline. It went back to high school days. My father had a partner named Cunningham, who was a doctor in Lancaster. His son joined the Navy the same time I did. He joined the Foreign Service the same time I did. He was in Saigon, when I was in Laos. I have pictures of us in the local paper, standing in front of the legation in Laos, the two of us, with our arms around one another. Plus, there was a third person there, who came from Lancaster. She was a secretary to somebody in the embassy. From this little town in Lancaster, you had three people there.

Q: Cunningham, what was his first name?

TANEN: William. He is teaching in Houston.



Q: Yes, I interviewed him. He does some interviewing for us. He became very much a China hand. So, you left there in 1955? TANEN: 1955.

Q: A little bit confused about what the hell was happening in this back water, as you say?

TANEN: The thing that confused me more was, as I said earlier, Washington was looking for one thing from me, and I was looking at it entirely differently. I couldn't see their plain view. It may have been the first time, but it was not the last time.

Q: Well, in 1955, what did you do?

TANEN: I was assigned as a special assistant. I said that I wanted to continue in the French world, and I wanted to go to Paris. I wanted to clear my head, so they sent me to Paris, a special assistant to the public affairs office.

Q: So, you went to Paris from 1955 to?

TANEN: I stayed there only a little over a year. I met my wife there, who was an American, and we were married. I worked there for about a year, and Charles Yost came. He was there as minister. So, I got a chance to work with him again. It was a good time in Paris, but I guess I was too used to being on my own. I ended up not liking being in the big embassy. So, when it came time to see if there was something else, I was asked by USIA and the Department if I would be willing to go into Hungarian language training, and go to Budapest. This was just about the time of the revolution.

Q: Yes. Well, let's first talk a bit about Paris. Who was the public affairs officer?

TANEN: It was a man named Morill Cody, who had been a good friend of Hemingway's and wrote a book about Hemingway's Paris. He had lived in Paris. He was an old newsman. He was a marvelous, interesting man. It was a very high-powered group of people there. I was just sort of drafting letters, and meeting people at the airport. It was not something that I appreciated. It was a big embassy, and it was an embassy that was still somewhat shaken by the McCarthy thing. It was also an embassy as you would expect, extremely pro-French, and very unhappy that we were taking more of an interest in places such as Vietnam. The discussions within the embassy itself, or with the French that you met, was a we/them kind of a situation, much different when I went back several years later.



Q: What was the background of your wife?

TANEN: My wife is from Buffalo, New York. She graduated from Brown, the school of design there. She was a top model with the Ford agency in New York. She was working in Paris for the Ford as a magazine cover girl. We knew some mutual friends there, so we met, and then one thing lead to another. Amazingly enough, we are still married.

Q: At the time, did the Foreign Service life appeal to her?

TANEN: No, it did not at all. I don't think it does to this day, but she certainly went along with it. She had a number of French friends. Through her, I became more involved in the French community than I would have if I had been staying with the embassy. There were some strange things. Remember, this is Paris 1955. There was very little heating. We were still having shortages. My landlady was a descendant of Captain Dreyfus, so I used to sit and listen to her, discussing the Dreyfus affair, which in those days, was very much alive.

Q: Oh, yes. It wasn't that far off. It was 1870s, wasn't it?

TANEN: 1880s.Q: So, it wasn't really that far off. That really put a split in French society and the military.

TANEN: The wounds were raw, and they still were even in 1955. We could get into some great discussions.

Q: So, how did you find that USIA fit? Was there a division within the embassy of USIA? Everybody was sort of doing their thing. It wasn't a tight-knit little band of brothers.

TANEN: Well, you see, I come not only from Lancaster, but I come from two very small posts. Suddenly, I was in something. I was a small cog in a big wheel. I realize now that I was wrong, but at the time, it bothered me a lot.

Q: I think also we all tend to find places where we feel more comfortable. What the hell? Why not be comfortable where you are working?



TANEN: Yes, but I could have taken more advantage of France than I did. Now I go back to France every year. At that particular time, it was a queasy feeling. But, another sidelight is that I was working at that time with the Fulbright foundation. The Fulbright foundation, at that time, had a budget of two million dollars. When I went back to Paris in 1972, our budget was \$400,000.

Q: Two million dollars, of course, was not small change.

TANEN: But, the office was the same size. You had \$400,000, and \$400,000 from the French, \$800,000, that was it. So, there was a lot more money trolling around in those early days.

Q: You came back to study Hungarian in 1956? TANEN: Yes, in 1956. I started Hungarian language training in the fall of 1956, and went to Bloomington, Indiana. That was a mistake. It was probably the worst post I ever had. There was an Air Force group there, and Pat Byrd was a Foreign Service officer there. The two of us were assigned to the Legation in Budapest, but we had to have our year of training first. So, in 1957, I finished training, and in 1958, went to...

Q: Well, what were you picking up, because obviously October 1956 was traumatic, because it was the Hungarian revolution. How was this reflected where you were, by your teachers?

TANEN: Our main teacher was somebody who had left in the 1940s, after WWII. Her husband had been the son of the mayor of Budapest. The assistant professors who came in later were people who had been there during the revolution, had come out during the revolution. So we were getting, in addition to our language training, a lot of input from them as to what had happened, and how it felt, and so forth. Of course, there was the old situation of the Americans expected to come in, and John Foster Dulles had promised, and this, that and the other thing. The Americans had let them down. So, we got a lot of feedback at that time, before we left the country to go to Budapest.

Q: How did you find Hungarian?

TANEN: Impossible. First of all, it's hard for me to learn languages. It was a language, as far as I was concerned, related to nothing. With French, Italian, there are a few words, but, with Hungarian, it was zilch. It was all memory. I did the best I could. I was not their best student, by any means, but I passed whatever I had to pass for FSI to go to Budapest, reading, writing-  
(end of tape)



Q: You were in Budapest from when to when?

TANEN: From the fall of 1958 until the fall of 1961.

Q: The fall of 1958 or 1957, because usually it is a year's training?

TANEN: That's right. Because it was a little more than a year, because they weren't ready for me. I didn't get in until 1958. I can't remember now whether it was the fall or not, but I was in 1958, 1959, 1960, and left in 1961. I had a little over three years.

Q: What was the situation in Budapest when you got there? First, talk about the Legation and then about the political situation there.

TANEN: The Legation, again, was very small. We had a charg   d'affaire, Gary Ackerson. Again, he was one of the better officers. As you may recall, in those days, USIA was not welcome in those countries. So we were transferred to the Department of State, and went there as an FSR4 or 5, whatever it was, and to the political section. The number two was Jim Pratt. We had two CIA people, station chief, one in the political section, and one in the economic. We had Pat Byrd with consul officers. We had an air attach  , military attach  , and they had their staffs. We had administrative officers. There weren't more than eight at any one time. We had no marine guards. We had what we always referred to as our church attach  .

Q: You had Cardinal Mindszenty as a guest.

TANEN: He was living in the ambassador's office. Cardinal Mindszenty. He was an unbelievable man, and boy did we get to know him.

Q: Why don't we talk about him? What happened, how did he get there, and then your relations, as you saw him, at that time?

TANEN: Okay. You may remember this. Cardinal Mindszenty was the Prince Primate at the fall of the Nazi regime. He considered himself, through the church, to be the Prince Primate and the true ruler of Hungary. Then, you had the communists there, who were not exactly of his frame of mind. They arrested him, and he was in prison for a while with one of his priests. I think there was a film made, if not a book as well, about all this.



Q: Alfred Krisler, I think, did one. I can't think of the name of it.

TANEN: I can't think of the name of it now, but talking about his ordeal, as a prisoner of the communists. He also had been in prison with the Germans for a while. The cardinal's original name was Ben. He came from a village called Chemin's. He was from a very poor background. He had gone to school in Vienna to become a priest. With the coming of the October 23rd revolution, he got out and considered himself in charge of the government. By November 2nd, because the Russians were back, he was in worse trouble than he had been in before. So, he came to the American Legation and asked for asylum. We didn't have an ambassador and we only had a chargé<sup>1/2</sup>. The American policy has only been to never accept a person seeking political asylum. Part of the reason may have been guilt on the part of what happened, but we accepted Mindszenty, not his assistant, but him. We had no idea, I'm sure, he would stay very long. I think he was there for 12 or 14 years. He took over the ambassador's office, and that is where he held mass, and that is where he slept. The ambassador chargé<sup>1/2</sup> moved across the hall. The secure area of the Legation was the third floor, with an electric door, and all those push button things. The fear of the Americans was, what do you do if the communists come to take him? There was no way in the world we could stop them from banging down the front door, and hauling off the Cardinal.

So, by the time I got there, he had already been in there for a year or two. If he had a toothache, what did you do? In a pinch, there were one or two doctors in town, who were obviously reporting to the Abele, the secret police, who would come in and pull his tooth, or fill it. They flew in an Air Force doctor, once or twice a year, to give him a physical. The only people he could see were the Legation proper officers and people, or his sister and his mother, who would come in from Chemin's twice a year to spend Christmas and Easter with them, and sleep in the ambassador's office. So it became a little like a zoo up there, from time to time.

Remember, we had no marine guards, so guess who had to spend the night at duty? What you did was you went on duty after work at 6:00. This was an enormous building, and we didn't fill half of it. We had to go through the entire building with a flashlight, to make sure there weren't any people standing around. Then, you would go down to the kitchen where a Hungarian woman ran a small cafeteria, and she had prepared dinner for the Cardinal and me. We took dinner upstairs, and the Cardinal and I had dinner. Prior to us having dinner, I went up and got him. There was a little courtyard in the middle of the building. I walked up and down the courtyard with him, and that was his exercise. He would be moaning and groaning all the time. Then, after I did that, I took him back, and he went to his bed, and I locked myself into the code room administrative section. There I stayed, theoretically, until the next morning, when I was relieved by the first officer coming in. This was seven nights a week. We had eight officers and people. The military were not allowed to do this, so that was it. There were only eight of us. There was the code clerk, the administrative officer, and the rest of us.



The social life in Budapest was magnificent. You had parties every single night, within the diplomatic service. Sometimes Hungarians would attend. Some nights, you didn't get home for three or four days. You would go home and change clothes, and come back and spend the night, because you kept trading your duties. That got to be a bit tiresome, but he was the story of the hour. There were continual phone calls from outside, "How is he? What is he doing? What's he eating? What's he talking about?" Every reporter that came through wanted to see the Cardinal, but of course, we couldn't allow him to see anybody. Once you opened the door, you were scared to death the Hungarians would say, "Well, here he is." The Cardinal felt that he was still Prince Primate, and he was there temporarily, and eventually, he was going to take over the government again. He felt the people were just waiting for him to march out the door, and take possession of the country. Of course, what you found out after you had been there a while, people were saying, "Who?" It was so unreal, and yet, I got to the point that I really liked him. We would talk, and talk, and talk. What he was talking about had nothing to do with what was really going on. He was convinced there was going to be a war. He was convinced that he was going to take over the country again. He was convinced that communism was the worst evil, since God knows what. In that way, maybe he was right. But, he was writing his memoirs, which he later published.

Q: What was the connection with the papacy?

TANEN: He was in touch through the Legation, through Washington, through the pope, and the pope's office. Of course, that is how they eventually got him out.

Q: You had to use the diplomatic term, "a pain in the butt," for the papacy, in a way?

TANEN: That's exactly what happened, of course. As I understand it, (of course, I was long since gone), what happened was things were getting better with the Hungarians and ourselves. We wanted to have them make it an embassy, instead of a Legation. Nothing could be done until we got rid of the Cardinal. So, we finally forced the papacy to order him to leave. He didn't know whether he would make it to the border or not, but anyhow, he went. He got to Rome, where he continued to be a pain in the neck. What they did was say, "Okay, you've reached retirement age, congratulations! Now, go back to Vienna, and go to the school in Vienna where you graduated, and good luck, you're finished." That's the last time I saw him too, in 1968 at the school in Vienna.

Q: Well, now, let's move to working in Hungary from 1958 to 1961. What was the situation in Hungary? Did it change at all?



TANEN: Well, you had Nagy now in charge. The man who had taken over as prime minister until the Russians got back. He had taken refuge in Yugoslavia.

Q: Yes.

TANEN: He and General Pastier Pal had taken over the army, had taken over the country, and were actually fighting the Russians. They went to Yugoslavia, and were held in Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia said they would turn them over to the Russians if they would not be killed. Of course, they turned them over, and they were killed. So, that you had this government run by a man who had been severely tortured by the communists. His fingernails were gone. He was in charge. You had a very strong Soviet presence in Hungary. You had 200,000 troops around Budapest. There were army trucks always passing you on the street. The American Legation was restricted to within 25 kilometers, 25 miles of the center of the city, without special permission. You still had a city where the buildings were filled with bullet holes. You could see where heavy fighting went on. You could talk to people, and you would find the bitterness. There was tremendous bitterness against the United States, for not having come in. You had a very closed diplomatic corps, the Dutch, the West Germans, sometimes the Yugoslavs, the French, the Brits, the Swiss. It was incestuous, if you will. Then, you had a feeling that if you weren't careful, this thing was going to open up again. These people were fed up. You never knew what they were going to do next. How many of these people could you talk to? Well, not very many, because you were followed continually. Everything was bugged. The Legation, for reasons which I will never figure out, decided to have the outside of the building replastered. They covered it while they were doing it. Well, we had 10 microphones every square foot. So, we had people coming in continually pulling out microphones. We found microphones in our apartment, in our toilet. We had a wonderful apartment, overlooking the Danube. You knew you were being recorded at all times. Yet, there was something about it that was kind of fun, in retrospect, especially because you could get around in ways.

For example, I told you I love horses. There is a place called Tattersall, outside of Budapest, right in the outskirts. So, I found it with the Italian ambassador. We used to go there and ride. What I found was that party members who weren't at the highest level were there with their children, learning how to ride. So, I got to know I don't know how many of them. I was the best political reporter you ever heard of, because I had stories on who's going where, and what is happening, and the rumors. Well, eventually, the communist government, the regime, figured out what was going on. They restricted me, and would not let me ride anymore. The other thing you could do is you could go to Lake Balaton, you could go around town, if you got permission. I could get permission. Sometimes, you would have Joe Alsop, or others coming through. I would go along as an interpreter. We would travel around, or sometimes the air attaché<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, who I had known from his trip to Vientiane, Laos. The military attaché<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> might say, "We want you to come along, in the political section. We are going to drive by the air bases and just see if we can see anything major there," or something like that. We were always followed.



Another time, my wife and I were driving around. Our daughter had been born at that time. Walt Disney & Company were there doing a picture. We took a couple turns and we lost our tail. We went up to Disney, and talked to them, and we came back. I had to go to a reception at the foreign ministry that night. I went, and my wife stayed home. I came out, and my tires were flat, because they felt I had deliberately lost them. I had to go back in and say to my host, "I didn't deliberately lose them. They can pump up my tires, please." They made them pump up my tires. It was this continual kind of crap that was going on to drive you crazy.

Q: Did we see this as a captive state, the 200,000 Soviet troops or so, that we could probably start doing more business with them? TANEN: Without any doubt. Without the Soviet influence, whether they would have had another revolution or not, I don't know, but certainly it would have been possible to have done a lot more there. But, not as long as we had the Cardinal.

Q: I'm told a story. I don't know whether it's true or not. That, one time, you were moving some equipment, and a big box started to go out the front door. The security people said, "You can't take that out." So, every officer who would leave the post, would knock on the box, and say, "Good night, your eminence."

TANEN: That is very, very possible. I could tell you other stories, if you are interested.

Q: Sure, why not?

TANEN: One night I was on duty, and a bell rang downstairs. They had AVO, secret police, down there. I wasn't supposed to leave my security post. It was a woman's voice who said she wanted to come in. I told her she couldn't come in until 9:30 tomorrow morning. She went on and on. I kept insisting that she couldn't. I told her I was sorry, but I couldn't come down and let her in. I explained to her that she could go to the consular section tomorrow. The AVO guard got on and said, "Look, it's the Cardinal's mother and sister." I went down, and let them in. I woke the Cardinal up and said, "Merry Christmas."

Christmas Eve, we would have mass. Any of the Catholics from the various missions could come to mass. So, one of us would have to stand by to take the Cardinal, or he would have mass every Sunday, for the Catholics in the mission.

Q: You weren't a Catholic, were you?

TANEN: No. Q: I imagine you could have done the mass.



TANEN: I could do it with my eyes closed. Another night, there was silence all over the building. If anybody broke in, every siren in the building went off. Our orders were, "Go next door, and get the Cardinal. Bring him in to the secure area, and lock yourself in. Call the administrative officer, and stay put. Then, go into the code room and start emptying the secret files into the big barrel. If necessary, burn them." So, I got the Cardinal. We were in our pajamas, and went into the code room. We were thinking about loading the stuff in. I called the administrative officer. I looked at the Cardinal and said, "You don't happen to have a match?" Neither one of us had a match. We couldn't have burned anything. It was about an hour later when they came in and got us.

The Cardinal was always playing games. He had a funny sense of humor. Once, I couldn't get in the electric door, and I was standing there with his tray of food. In that case, what you were supposed to do is push the button, and whoever was there would push another button to let you in. I couldn't seem to get anywhere. I was pushing the buttons, the bell was ringing and nothing was happening. I looked through the peep hole, and he was looking through the peep hole too, at me, laughing like crazy. He wasn't going to let me in. There was no way.

Q: Well, weren't we playing the chronology game, who was standing on the parades, and all, who was in charge?

TANEN: Yes, we played all those things, and then went where. It got a little bit screwy. One woman I met was obviously a very cultured lady. Her father had been a Jewish industrialist there. I met her, and we got to know one another. I rode with her. Naturally, she got caught. I didn't see her for several months. I finally saw her on a street corner, and went up and said, "Hello, Ava, how are you?" Her English was fluent. She said, "Do you have any idea what happened to me?" I said, "No." She said, "Well, I was put in prison for knowing you, and they made me confess that you were my lover." I said, "This is nonsense." She said, "Yes, do you know what I'm doing now? I work on the railroad, I lay ties on the railroad. This is what you did to me, by knowing you?" So, that is another interesting sideline.



We had Joe Toplosky, who was our political CIA guy. He was on the street corner one night, and he overheard conversations about a bunch of kids arrested in 1956. There were going to be 18, on such and such date, and they were going to be executed on those dates. Their bodies were to be thrown over the wall of the cemetery, just inside Budapest, and buried in a mass grave, but the family could be there to claim the body and put them into the grave. So, we talked this over with our chargé d'affaires, Gary Ackerson, and he said, "Give it a whirl." So, we took a tape recorder and cameras on a Sunday morning, and we weren't followed. To this day, I don't know why they didn't follow. We went there, and sure enough, they were throwing the bodies in canvases over. The families were there. We took I don't know how many hundreds of pictures. We interviewed the families, who said, "Yes, that's Joe, and he was killed," and this that and the other thing. Then, they threw them into the grave. We walked back to our car and left. These pictures were sent to the United Nations. Hungary was out of the United Nations for a while, and they were trying to get back in. Suddenly, our pictures arrived showing that these kids were still being killed for what they did in 1956. That kept Hungary out of the United Nations, I think, for another two years. Toplosky figured our days were numbered, because they knew who had done it. But, they never did anything, and I don't know why.

Q: Was the security service trying to use these traps? All of a sudden, were there blondes coming at you?

TANEN: I kept hoping, but it never happened. One of my favorite stories was about Dwight Martin. He was a war correspondent in the Pacific, and he was also in Germany as OSS. He looked like a German Nazi officer. He was blue eyed. He was Time magazine's correspondent. He was married, and living in Vienna. I had gotten to know Dwight, coming in and out of Budapest. One night, after he had been there a night or two, he said, "The strangest thing happened." He comes in with a chauffeur driven car. He looks like a foreign correspondent. He goes to stay at the Duma Hotel, and he said, "Naturally, there was a rap on the door, and this beautiful woman came in, and I had a great night." The next morning, they came to him. Now, this may be his story, and it may not be true. They showed him all these pictures, and told him they would show them to his wife unless he started cooperating with them. They were pictures of Dwight doing this, that and the other thing with the woman. He said, "Those are the best pictures that have ever been taken of me. I'll take three of those, four of those."

Q: Yes, if it works it works, if it doesn't, it doesn't.

TANEN: Another story is the British had a correspondent come in, and the same thing happened. The guy went bezerk. He went to the British embassy in tears. He didn't know what to do. We had others who were trapped. We had Gary's secretary who was trapped.



Q: As you were there, was there any particular change in things, between the United States and Hungary?

TANEN: Nothing. It just kept getting worse. The head of the diplomatic service office - there was a nasty piece of news - I can remember being there, and he was having a meeting with a bunch of Guyanese, and others. They were pro-communist, and they were saying, "What is your worst problem here?" He was giving them a bunch of hogwash. I kept thinking to myself, "He should say that the worst problem is that we are communists." This system doesn't work. Of course, he never said that. Well, this guy who was so violently anti-American became Hungarian ambassador to the United States, and defected. I thought, "There is justice for you." Q: Well, did you have the feeling that Hungary had been quite a developed country? Here it was, sitting under, essentially barbarian rule, and waiting to get out, and let Hungary be Hungary again.

TANEN: It was pretty sad. That's exactly what it was. It's a sophisticated country.

Q: What about the cultural life there?

TANEN: It was quite good. Actually, there was a night life, a singer named Horthy Hanna, who was a night club singer. She sang for Frans Joseph, she sang for Hitler, and she was still singing when I was there. We used to go listen to her every once in a while, singing all the old songs. The opera worked. It wasn't great, but it worked. You had a lot of cultural programs coming through there. Some were for the State Department, or USIA singers, a pianist, a violinist, a quartet. There was a lot of that going on. The Brits were doing the same thing, and the Italians.

Q: So, it was really a matter of marking time.

TANEN: It was a matter of marking time. But to me, it showed me what communism was all about. It was also an important time in my life. It was my wife's first post. She said, "Are they all like this?" What do you say? "No, it isn't all like this, or maybe this isn't all that bad either." We were allowed out every six weeks, or two months. We would drive to Vienna to eat, drink and be merry, and to talk, or do whatever. As you cross the border going out, they always opened the trunk of the car to see if the Cardinal was there. You never got away from this cardinal shadow. But, I can't say it was all negative. There was a lot of positive out of it. Part of the positive, again, were the people I worked with. It was an interesting situation. What makes the communist work, or not work, or how long is it going to last? They were sitting on a time bomb there.



Q: Well, why don't we stop at this point. I'll put it at the end here, so we know where to pick it up. We'll pick this up in 1961, when you leave Hungary. Where did you go?

TANEN: Senegal.

Q: All right, we'll pick it up, going to Senegal.

TANEN: Okay.

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Q: Today is the 1st of May, 2001. Ted, we are next in 1961, in Senegal. How did that assignment come about?

TANEN: Well, this is after, of course, Budapest. We suddenly had a new president, Kennedy. There was a whole new feeling in Washington. I went back to Washington, my wife and I, and child. There, I was transferred from the Department, back to USIA. The question at that particular time was, which of two choice spots in the world did you want to serve? There was a certain amount of pressure upon me to go back to Vietnam, because I served there. I was very reluctant for two reasons: 1) I didn't want to leave my family, and 2) I was a little concerned about what was going on there, even though we weren't really involved in it at that point, to the extent we became. When I left Laos, as I stated earlier, we went from a post of two, or three or four Americans, to a post of about 500 Americans in a period of a little over two years. It really didn't make a hell of a lot of sense to poor, old naive me. The other place they were very busy pushing was Africa. It had something to do with what was going on in the south, the black movement. The head of USIA was Edward R. Morrow, who was probably the best director they ever had, and Don Wilson was deputy director. Don Wilson and I had served in Asia together for many years, when he was at Time-Life. So, Don asked if I would be interested in going to black Africa, and the place he decided I should go was Senegal. There was a period where I had to go back and take some French training, and more French training, and then off to Senegal.



I'm going to digress just for a second here. I have been giving some talks, recently, to groups in the United States, in the New York area, through the Department of State. These people have been interested in why I became a Foreign Service officer, how did it all come about, what was my career, and what was good, and what was bad, so on and so forth. As I talk, I realized that there were certain things in each country that I served in, which lead me to conclude when I got out I wanted to do something that was similar to what I had been doing, I couldn't have done it without the experience. As Laos was one, watching a post get built up, in a back water, Senegal was an interesting case, in that Washington wanted you to go out and make certain approaches. Kennedy had some brilliant people around him, as we all know; McNamara, George Bundy, people like that. They had ideas as to how a country develops. Senegal was considered one of those countries that was going places.

Q: This was Rostov's taking off for...



TANEN: I was going to get into that. That was the takeoff landings and staggering, or whatever it was called. It sounded good, and it sounded interesting; it sounded like it made sense. This was another milestone in my career, in that it didn't make sense. But, you don't know these things until you get out and you start practicing them. Well, why didn't it make sense? It didn't make sense, because you are dealing with people. You are not dealing with a textbook case. When I got to Senegal, and even though I had been in French speaking countries before, I had never run into anything quite like Senegal, which was French. It was truly a French province. Your middle classes there were French. The restaurants were run by French. The butcher was a Frenchman, and the wine merchant was a Frenchman, the barber was a Frenchman. The president, Leopold Senghor, a brilliant person, was more French than he was African. He was married to a French woman. The higher echelon of the Senegalese government were French. Everything was in French. The schools were still teaching, at that point, "our ancestors the Gauls", even though obviously these people didn't come from Gaul. The French they spoke there was elegant French, since many people had been to France. A lot of them had fought in the French army. A lot of them had been in the French assembly. It was a French experience. From Washington, they were looking at Senegal as an African country. It certainly was an African country. Once you get below the surface, it was Africa. At the same time, it was a French country. I saw how the French use their culture to make their point. They were using their culture as a political tool. Even though I had served with them before and gotten to know the French very, very well, I had never really seen anything like it. The school books, everything was in French. The films were in French, everything, everything, everything, the newspapers. You may have had a Senegalese as a newspaper editor, but right under him was a Frenchman. In the ministry of this, that or the other, there was always the Frenchman. There was this complete inundation of their culture at that level, at that time, to France. Then, we come stumbling in and say, "Okay, now, we want to see now about American democracy, about what is going on." The French, as they used to when I was in Indochina, resented our coming at all. They thought we were trying to take over. Secondly, some of the Senegalese were very interested in learning about America, and learning English. What they were not really interested in was what made America tick. They were looking at it as Frenchmen would, which was very critical. There was the French army presence there, there were French admirals there. You couldn't get away from the French. So, there was this whole thing to me of an awakening for the first time, that if you really wanted to use American culture, then you had to inundate American culture in ways which were not necessarily outwardly political, but which would have political implications, just as the French had done. So, that was an important period for me.

Q: You were there from 1961 to? TANEN: 1966, four years.

Q: Well, what was your job?



TANEN: I was public affairs officer. I had a small staff. We were responsible for Mauritania, and the Gambia. So, I got to travel around quite a bit. Phil Kaiser was our ambassador, a political appointee, who had been Avril Hammond's assistant in New York city. That is how he got his ambassadorship, but he was extremely well connected in Washington. We were there, for example, during the assassination of Kennedy. Don Easum was first secretary there and later became Assistant Secretary of State and ambassador to different places. He and I were the ones who went over to the palace and reported, at something like midnight, that Kennedy had been assassinated, and President Senghor was being invited to attend the funeral in Washington, which he then decided to decline.

The reason I stayed so long in Senegal was that at about half way through the assignment, Senghor decided to hold what he called the first Negro arts festival. Nothing like this had ever been done before. He invited every black country, which included the Indies, every African country, and other countries as well. Of course, it also included the United States.

President Johnson, probably Mrs. Johnson, took a great deal of interest in what was going on. What they did was to assign a lady called Virginia Innis Brown, who was a well known New York socialite, to represent the president. She had worked with the White House before. She had done things in Paris and elsewhere. Also, Phil Kaiser was pulled out and sent to London as DCM. They sent Mercer Cook, who was a black professor from Howard, as ambassador. Mercer spoke elegant French, fluent French. He was a good friend of Duke Ellington, and Mercer Ellington is named after him. Mercer was as marvelous a gentleman as I ever knew. He was a close friend of Senghor's. So, our relationship in that country changed almost over night, with Mercer arriving. They started building up what would be the first and the last festival of Negro arts. It turned out to be absolutely fantastic. We had Alvin Ailey, we had Duke Ellington, we had poets, we had musicians, we had theater, everybody you could think of. The French, of course, never expected us to come in this way. The French sent their team over, and built a museum there, and the Daniel Serrano theater. I can't even begin to tell you all that went on. A fantastic film was made of it, by William Greeves, the black cinematographer. It was made by USIA. He pretty well covered the entire group of people who came in. The chiefs of state came in, for example. There was dancing. Every night and every day, there were wonderful things going on, including plays and spectacles of the island of Gory, where the slaves were shipped. Plane after plane of American blacks came in.



Virginia Innis Brown arrived to take charge. I loved Virginia, I really did. Her one problem, of course, was that she was white. She was resented by Mercer, and all the blacks. But, her French was excellent. She came in as only somebody like Virginia could arrive, with her own silver dishes, trunks of jewelry. She rented a very nice house in the middle of Dakar, and began to be in competition with Mercer Cook. That was really a sideline, because the whole thing went off extraordinarily well. The Soviets took one look at what was going on. They got all excited, and sent one of their ships down to act as a hotel and anchored it offshore of Dakar. They sent in Yevtushenko the poet and other things. He was quite young in those days. We all were. He was accompanied by his guards, of course, because he was so outspoken against the Soviet system. The accomplishment, as far as I was concerned, was watching everything go off smoothly. The American PAO and the American embassy were very much involved in the whole thing. But, we got to know Yevtushenko, and he would invite us out to the Soviet ship, and serve us caviar and vodka through the night. Then, we would come back to our house, and we would sit up all night talking politics. He got into terrible trouble with his keepers because he was so outspoken. It was a Soviet move. They didn't know how to handle it. It was a black festival. They didn't have any blacks. So, this was their answer on how to make a presence, and it worked fairly well.

Q: The French built this up. What were they putting on?

TANEN: They brought in people from Martinique and elsewhere. The whole thing was on Negritude, which was a term that was very popular at that time; "What is Negro, and what does it all mean?" They had book sales, they had plays, cinema, of course, lots of books, readings, a lot of politicians. They were trying to continue their presence in Africa, and make a statement. I don't think they expected the Americans to come in so strongly. I think a lot of the money that was put into this from the American side was put in by Virginia herself, or people she raised it from. For example, she found Alvin Ailey somewhere in Europe. They were in tatters, as far as their costumes were concerned. She gathered them all up on \$20,000 and brought them in. Of course, Alvin Ailey is world known, but he wasn't then.

Q: For the record, he was Alvin Ailey.

TANEN: He is a black American dancer, now dead. He died fairly recently. He has become one of the best American dance groups in the world. But, at that particular time, he was not known. Duke Ellington came in with his entire band, including his son Mercer. It blew your mind to watch all this going on.

Q: Well, let's sort of go back. When you arrived, you were a public affairs officer. What sort of programs did USIA have?



TANEN: They brought in speakers to talk about the Kennedy policies. You had film programs, to a certain extent. The library was very popular. I pushed English teaching, because that seemed to me to be one of the biggest things we could do there, including teaching it on the radio. It was a standard USIA program with emphasis, as usual, presenting the positive aspects of an administration in Washington, which meant a lot of press handouts, a lot of getting things into the press, a lot of trying to show what the Kennedy/Johnson years were doing. Then, remember we were having the riots and so forth in Alabama, in Mississippi, and elsewhere. So, you had to try to counteract some of that. It was appearing in the French press.

Q: What was our goal in Senegal? What was in it for us?

TANEN: At that point, and you can argue this, our goal in Senegal was our goal in, I'm afraid, most of the world: to counteract the Soviets. That was always in the back of the mind. When I first went to Senegal in 1961, it was really the opening up of Africa, as far as the United States was concerned. We did not, at that particular time, have embassies in all these countries. We would have a consular general, as we had in Senegal. That consular general might be responsible for three or four countries. It was at that time that we began sending some fairly well known people into each country of Africa. We went down to the Gambia, of course, for independence day. We suddenly had an ambassador in the Gambia. We didn't have an ambassador in Mauritania. I think it had to do with the black situation in the United States. But, I also think that, as with everything we were doing at that particular time, because of the situation in the United States, we were getting hit pretty hard by the Soviet Union and propaganda. I think this was a means of counteracting what they were doing.

Q: Well, we had the whole civil rights movement during the whole time you were there. So much of it was confrontational. With riots, imprisonment, bombings, the whole thing. How did you deal with that? For one thing, you were going through the press, which you mentioned before, had a French spin, French control.

TANEN: Well, you tried very hard to work with the French press, to place other materials. Then, you had speakers. When you had somebody like Mercer Cook, you used him to the best of your ability. What you were doing was hitting a certain elite, certainly not trying in the country. But, you were doing your best to counteract it, by showing Mercer, and so forth, talking on this. But, we took a beating, at that particular time. There is no question about it. It was not easy to counteract.

Q: How did you see Senegal at the time? What made the state viable, and what was its future?



TANEN: Well, at that particular time, the future of Senegal looked better than a lot of other places. First of all, there was no corruption. Secondly, the French were taking such an interest, mainly in Senegal, that it didn't look like they were ever going to let loose. Maybe from our point of view, that made good sense. In those days, the French desk at the Department of State was a very powerful European desk. It was a lot more powerful than other area desks. There were always rumblings. Some youth were trying to take over. But, it never looked like a dangerous blow up situation at that time, mainly because there was no corruption, and because there wasn't a lot of wealth. The main products of the country were peanuts, coconuts. Well, you aren't going to get rich on coconuts. There was not a lot going on. Now, remember, the Rostow thing, for a country to really become a takeoff power, and they expected them to become powers, they had to have certain things. They had to have an economic base. They had to have a big population. They had to have a population that was highly educated. They had to have some riches, some minerals, or something they could produce. They had all these things going for them, as theoretically Nigeria, my next post had. That country could take off. A place like Senegal could not. It was sort of a stable place. What happened, of course, is that it still is today a stable country. It is one of the few countries that is. It still has elections. Senghor is still alive and living in Normandy, France with his wife. He's in his nineties. But, there was a feeling of stability in Senegal that you didn't get in a lot of other places.

Q: What were the Soviets doing there? Not just at the big festival, but... TANEN: The Soviets were very busy and working behind the scenes, but it was harder for them to work there because of the French. They had a big mission there, not as big as some of the other places I served. But, you weren't in constant confrontation with the Soviets, as you were in a lot of other places. Let me give you another example. It is also something that has stuck with me these many years. At some point, before the festival, it was decided to send from the United States, a naval force, off the coast of Africa. It was an atomic carrier, an atomic powered cruiser, and a destroyer. The idea was that this was to be a goodwill tour, and that we were to invite the president, the cabinet, everybody to come onboard. Then, they would put on an air show, and feed them lunch or whatever. It sounded like it made sense. The carrier would be about 150 miles at sea. They would send in planes to get people and fly them out. Don Easum and I were picked to go as translators and to accompany the press, the American/French/Senegalese press, and whichever ministers were going. Three or four ministers went, half a dozen press people went, the French admiral went. There were a few people, maybe 20 all together.



I must admit, for me, who wanted to be a naval aviator, it was a great experience. They flew in planes, and we got strapped in. We flew and landed on the carrier. We landed on the carrier deck, and the whole deck went down. The band played the national anthems, and then we headed to the admiral's cabin. He gave us tea and coffee. Then, we went up on the bridge, and we had sandwiches. They served us bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches, which I hadn't had in years. But, this was a Muslim group of Ministers. Then, they shot a few planes in the air. After they shot the planes in the air, they shot rockets in the air, and then the planes shot down the rockets. To me, it was stupendous. I couldn't have been more thrilled. I thought, "This is America at its best." We got back, they came back down, they met the pilots who all looked like they were 13 years old. We went down to the admiral's quarters.

We said, "Okay, what are your questions?" The first question was the obvious one, although I didn't think about it; "How much did it cost?" The admiral thought about it for a minute, and said, "I don't know, a million and a half dollars." Whatever he said was more than the Senegalese budget for that year. What we had done, and it changed, for a while at least, our relationship with the people we had taken up there, and some of the others, we scared them to death. They realized for the first time that they had no control whatsoever over us. There was nothing they could say or do that would make any difference to us. We could blow them out of the water. It was at that time that they decided that maybe they should talk more to the Soviets. It did change the situation for a little bit. That was another lesson I learned, and I hope others learned. I'm hoping that as years go by and I don't know what all these interviews are going to mean, but I assume somebody will say, "Well, what about the naval force in 1965, or whenever it was, what did it do, what did it accomplish?" Well, I can tell you what it accomplished in Senegal. It really did us more harm than good.

Q: Yes. Was there a problem in Senegal getting past the French social barrier? I mean, were the Senegalese, at least the movers and shakers open, to Americans?

TANEN: Yes, but it depended on their age, to a certain extent. They were not necessarily open to black Americans, which is an interesting point, except for Mercer Cook. They wanted to be treated as equals. The Senegalese are very, very open, in general, and friendly people. At other levels, student levels and so forth, you could contact them and talk to them, and hear what was going on. There was a lot of resentment against the French. The French were taking all the money out of the country, and so forth.

Q: How about an exchange program?

TANEN: We have one.



Q: We have one? Well, how does it work? TANEN: Well, it was the usual Fulbright and that kind of program. It worked very, very well, except, as usual, it's limited. I can't remember what the numbers were at this point, but we did send several people yearly. These were potential student leaders, potential ministers, news media people, to the United States. They were always taken down south, to see what was going on in our civil rights movement. That was another means of counteracting it, as much as you could counteract it, at that point, which was not easy to do.

Q: What was your impression? This is the really early days, for the peace corps. The French, for example, must have been annoyed as hell, weren't they?

TANEN: Well, if they were, they didn't show it too much. We had a fairly good group. It wasn't numerous, maybe 25 or 30. I remember going several times with the ambassador out to meet them. They would watch what they were doing; digging wells, plowing, teaching English. I think they made a good and positive impression. I think they were very well worth sending out there. There was also another group. I'm trying to think of it. It was an office in New York which sent out young blacks during the summer months, and they were well received. The French were always suspicious of us. They had visions of us taking over their colonies. They certainly still considered this a colony. But, I think it's also interesting that there were few French at that time that I talked to, who saw the dangers of what they were doing. In that, if everybody is French, and that is what they considered them, then they had the right to live in France. Then, I think when you saw the Algerian war in Morocco, then you suddenly had a number of French in black Africa and elsewhere, piling into France, saying that they were French. You have your problems today in France just because of that. The same thing happened in England.

Q: Were there two Senegals, one being the Francophone, educated town, Senegalese, and then sort of "out in the bush," or whatever you want to call it? Was that a different country? TANEN: Yes, it was a different country, but don't forget, the French were so deeply installed in what was a relatively small country. Even in villages, you had people who had been to France, and you didn't have the tribal problem there that I found in other black African countries. They were more united. They had their border problems with Portuguese Guinea, with Ghana, and some of the other countries. They were not as resentful in the bush, at least as I recall, of the French, as I found in other places. Every two or three months, we would drive to Mauritania. There, you found an entirely different situation. You found the Maures and a very underdeveloped place. Interestingly enough, the Chinese did very well in Mauritania.

Q: We are talking about the communist Chinese.

TANEN: They had an enormous embassy there.



Q: What were they doing?

TANEN: They were seeing how much trouble they could cause, not only for the Americans and the French, but the Soviets. They were working at agriculture, and trying to build projects, dams, irrigation, that sort of thing, and working to see if they could get their fingers into the sulfur mines that were there. But, they were there. The only stop sign in town had been put up by the Chinese communists. That is a whole other can of worms.

I'll never forget when we went down to the Gambia with Mercer Cook, and the DCC. As we flew over the Gambia, and the capital, we realized that there was a cruiser tied up at the dock, which was longer than the town. We landed, and went to the one hotel. We were waiting for the festivities to begin. Mercer and I were sitting on the front porch, and a whole bunch of school kids came up to us and said, "You're Americans," all speaking English, of course. They said, "You're here for the independence," and we said, "Yes." Then, they said, "We are here for the independence, too, because tomorrow the banks are opening up, and the bank is going to take the money away from the British and give us the money."

Q: Oh, boy.

TANEN: So, you could see where trouble was, but that was pretty typical. The Senegalese, at least at that level, were a hell of a lot more sophisticated than any of the others.

Q: Had there been a movement of American blacks coming back to find their roots? Had that started in Senegal, and were you seeing evidence of that?

TANEN: You saw a certain amount of it, but the French language threw them off. Then, there were two or three "businesses" that were starting up, one of those in Nigeria. It was obvious, or it was gossiped around town, that each and every one of these had been paid for by the CIA. This was not a legitimate entrepreneur. This was a guy who had been brought in to do whatever. I have an idea that they were right.

Q: Well, in 1966, you are now an African hand, really?

TANEN: Yes, we didn't expect to stay that long. As I said, I'm glad I did, because I never saw anything like this. We left right after the festival, and went back to Washington. I had a short stint in policy planning, where they told me all about national development, and how it was going to work. Then, I went off to SAIS (John Hopkins) for a year, taking economics.



Q: Well, what was policy planning at that time, within USIA?

TANEN: It was following the Rostow positions - those who would have papers out on take-offs and landings, and the whole thing, or the black civil rights movement, or the Soviets. With a lot of the policy planning at that time, you were dealing with Soviet actions, wherever they were, over the Voice of America. We spent a lot of time doing that. I wasn't even in it for a year. Then, I went to SAIS for economic training. I wanted to see how much foolishness there was in take-offs and landings. I found out that my suspicions were correct. Then, from there, in a weak moment, at a cocktail party, somebody asked me if I wanted to go to Nigeria. My wife almost divorced me on the spot. I don't know whether you knew him or not, but W. Beverly Carter was the public affairs officer, and he asked me to go, so I went. I ended up staying only less than a year in Nigeria as DPAO.

Q: That would be when?

TANEN: It would have been about, 1969, 1970. That fit the picture of national development to a tee, except the Biafran war, which didn't fit anybody. The Biafran war, of course, was the period when the Biafran tribe was taking over the oil fields, and trying to set up a separate nation. They bombed Lagos, and the Swedes were very much involved. It was a complicated period. My wife and I drove by jeep over a lot of Nigeria, up to the north, and places in the Muslim area. It couldn't have been more different than Senegal. People were not as sophisticated, although extremely bright. But, the corruption was so rampant that you could see that nothing was going anywhere. I don't care if you've got take-offs and landings, if you just wanted to get on the airplane, to get your boarding card, it was \$100. There was no way out of it. Bill Truehart was our ambassador. It was a pretty big embassy. We had consul generals in three areas. But, you had the tribal problem there that you didn't have in Senegal. You did not have the same feeling toward the British there as the Senegalese had toward the French. They were much more resentful of the British. It was an entirely different kind of a situation. But, one thing you did have was an enormous Soviet presence, causing all kinds of difficulties behind the scenes.



An interesting incident that happened with the Soviets was, we had our daughter, who at that time was about eight years old, in a British school. She had a best friend, and her best friend was with somebody in the Soviet embassy. So, she wanted to bring her friend home, and we said, "Sure." They wanted to meet us, and we met. It came about that I was called into the station chief's office, who had gotten wind of all of this. He said, "Do you know who he is?" I said, "I realize that he is, without any doubt in my mind, an agent." He said, "Yes, but he is not only an agent, he is a son of a man who is now head of the secret service in the Soviet Union, and he is a colonel, and you have been talking to him. We would like you to follow through on some things." I thought about it for a while, and I said, "You know, if I'm talking to him, he knows that you have me talking to him. So far, we are talking about our daughter's education, and things in general, and I don't mind telling you I don't want to use our daughters as go-betweens in all of this," which they were not happy about. But, what happened was our daughters became so close, that her friend would stay with us, and we would have dinner for them, and she would go over there. We would see the parents, and we talked to them as parents. We never got into any of this, although this guy was obviously bright as hell. Our daughter used to go with him to this fortress, which was the Soviet embassy. I said, "Well, what did you do there?" She said, "It was marvelous, and they had these fantastic films about cowboys and Indians in Russia." Of course, it was the whites fighting the reds. As far as she was concerned, they were all cowboys and Indians. It was kind of an interesting little sidelight. The girls kept in touch with each other for years afterward. But, they lost touch. But, they really were good friends. I can't say we were great friends with this other couple, but at least we sort of waltzed around one another, and realized that we might get into trouble if we talked too much. Anyway, Nigeria was not a very happy experience.

Q: How did you find the Nigerians, dealing with them? TANEN: I found them very, very difficult. The Biafrans are the easiest to get along with. They were the brightest. Interestingly enough, they were called "the Jews of Nigeria," although they were Christians. The Yoradas were still somewhat animistic, and the northerners were very Muslim. Of course, now they are having great problems in Nigeria with all of this. It's too many countries. The British made them into one country, but they weren't one country. For us to work with them was interesting, but it was not very productive.

Q: Was the Biafran war going on while you were there?

TANEN: Yes, it was grinding down, but it was there.



Q: I think one of the interesting things in American foreign policies, which is often forgotten, is that the Biafran war attracted a rather peculiar allegiance within the United States, which you might call the glitteratti. In England, too, and I guess in France. The French were messing around there. But, you had the concerts on behalf of Biafran, and in Congress, you had staffers, particularly, who were devoted to the Biafran cause. It caused all sorts of problems in the State Department, which had a perfectly reasonable policy we maintained, which was: We don't want to see Africa split up into a bunch of little tribal enclaves all over the place. Did you run across any of that?

TANEN: Oh, yes. You couldn't help it. You had news people coming out all the time, media from the United States. One who should go unmentioned, for example, wanted to show a riot, and so he took a bunch of pennies and threw them out in the street. Of course, every kid came running after those pennies, and he shot it, claiming this was some sort of a demonstration against the American embassy. We had lots of religious people. The Swedes were very much involved too. I sort of have kicked it out of my mind, because it was such a bad experience for me. You had also these people in Nigeria who were very, very religious, but in a Christian way. They had developed their own Christianity. I can't even remember their names now. But, you didn't dare go out on the beach, for example, or you didn't dare go here or there. They were always fighting amongst one another. It was hard to get a handle on it. Yes, the government was military, and the guy went and lived in England later, and another one came, and then you had the Bic fountain pen king there. Then, you had all these tribal leaders, and you had the hereditary chiefs, like kings. You were meeting them, and you were sort of weaving through. You never really got your handle on the damn place, or I didn't, anyway.

Q: Well, what were we doing there?

TANEN: We were trying to portray and encourage a unified Nigeria. That was the whole thing. As you said earlier, we weren't anti or pro Biafrans, we were just trying to get everybody to go together here, and stop this fighting. That was our main goal. Of course, the Soviets were trying to see what they could do to pull it apart. The Brits were very, very strong headed. The French were all over the place. It was a terrible mess.

Q: Well, you left within a year, why?

TANEN: Bev Carter was pulled out to become ambassador, and I asked for a transfer, because I thought I would be made political officer, but I wasn't. I really didn't like it there. I was transferred to Tunisia, back to the French world. That was as nice a post as you could have. I was there for three years.



Q: That would be from?

TANEN: 1970 to 1973. Bourguiba was still in the background.

Q: There was a long time when he wasn't particularly compos mentis?

TANEN: Well, it depended on which week. He was still kind of compos mentiHis son, BB, Jr. was supposed to be foreign minister, and then he got fired. What were the concerns there? The concerns there, even though this was North Africa, the feeling, at least in the Department of USIA, was that it was still part of the Middle East. You are still dealing with the Muslim religion, and it's strong. You had members of the Arab League. These are people who later on brought in Arafat and set him up there. There were remnants of WWII. The French were still very much involved, but nothing like Senegal. You had memories of the war that continued. You had the Soviets very much involved in the country as well. But, my description of Tunisia is that it was a country where everybody in the world had walked through, wiped their feet, and kept on going. You had the remnants of what had taken place in 1492 in Spain. Some of them came from Morocco. You had a large Jewish community there. You had very devout Muslims in their own manner. What were their fears? Their fears were that their neighbor, the good colonel in the north Qadhafi of Libya, would march in.

Q: al-Qadhafi.

TANEN: Yes... would eventually come in, and cause problems. There was reason to be suspicious, because there were always incidents going on at the university. They were afraid of what would happen if the Israel war got out of control. Would it affect them? It was a whole different set of worries, as far as they were concerned. What was the American policy? American policy was to show Tunisians that our relationship went back several hundred years, and we were not going to let whatever happened in Israel disturb what we were doing in Tunisia. It was a democratic government. Historically, it was the most fascinating country I ever served in, with the wars, and all of that. You never really knew how they were going to come down in all this. There was always a little bit of suspense there. Arch Calhoun was Ambassador, then Talcott Seelye, who was an Arabist, came in. I think they appreciated Talcott very much, because he was an Arabist. They wanted to be considered Arabic, and good Muslims, and yet they weren't. They were in-between someplace. But, as a place to work, it couldn't have been more fascinated. There was continual correspondence coming through, wanting to see Bourguiba, or wanting to see what was going to happen, or what Colonel al-Qadhafi might do, or who is going to be replacing Bourguiba. (End of tape)



So, you were constantly working with the press, television was becoming popular. Algeria really hadn't blown up, but the colonel thing was long since over. But, it hadn't turned into the mess it is today. You kept thinking if there was some way you could get the whole Maghreb to work together. That was part of our policy, to see if they couldn't form a unified economic policy of some kind, if not a political one. You realize you are dealing with a lot of different kinds of cultures here, even though they were basically somewhat the same. The place looked French, like Dakar, but it was still very much, from the point of view of ancient culture, much different. The French just didn't have a hold on it, hadn't kept a hold on it.

Q: Were the French there in numbers?

TANEN: Not like they had been. There was still a French Army/Navy base there. The French fleets came in continually, but so did the Americans. It seems to me that while I was there, they started letting Russian ships come in, to refuel and for shore leave. It has turned into something else now, but there was so much intrigue within the palace, for example. Bourguiba, who was really running the country, and then Mrs. Bourguiba. There was a lot of palace intrigue, shall we say. But, nonetheless as countries in that area go, it was a fairly stable country.

Q: What sort of programs were we running there?

TANEN: A lot of film programs, a lot of television, library not so important. Again, I tried to do more in the field of English teaching, which I think we always neglect. We didn't have a very strong course there. AID was enormous there. We were there working with them as their propaganda arm. We had a military training program there. We were training pilots. So, we had a fairly large contingent of Army/Air Force people, pilots and others. We would work with them on trying to get people to become aware of what was going on. We were trying basically to show American interest, which had a historic base in Tunisia.

Q: How about the regime in Algeria at that time? Was it doing anything, or was it pretty absorbed with its own problems?



TANEN: It had its own problems. We did go. My wife and I, again, drove all over the place. We went to Libya before they closed the border. We drove to Algiers, we drove to Morocco, and back and forth. There were never any problems. Algeria was always a potential threat, militarily, but their fear was really Libya, and what the Libyans might be doing in the universities. Unemployment, for example, was always a problem. This is another thing that keeps coming up in all these places; education is the answer. Well, education is the answer if you know what to do with the educated. If you don't know what to do with the them, then you have a built-in revolt on your hands. This is what the cities were very much concerned with there. What do you do with all these people after they have left school? They didn't have enough jobs, they didn't have enough support going on. So, they kept pushing tourism. Tourism became a very big program there. I don't know whether you remember, but at a certain point in our foreign policy, we were pushing tourism toward the United States. This happened a little later when I was in Paris, but they said we should be tourist agents. This is a little bit of what was happening to the Tunisian government. They were asking our help and support in getting more tourists to come. Well, they were getting thousands and thousands of tourists from Sweden, on nude beaches. This caused some problems. The children would then be out on the beach, and then the next thing you knew, there was a certain amount of stuff going on that the Tunisians would rather not have. Then, they had Hammamet, which became one of the principal homosexual centers, I think, in North Africa. That caused them embarrassment and problems. As they struggled to find out what they should produce, or how they should direct their efforts, they kept going more and more toward tourism. Well, tourism has its hidden negatives. I became very much against it, especially tourism with groups of people, which contributed nothing to the country, except confusion.

Q: Did you run across a problem with our policy toward Israel there?

TANEN: Israel was always a problem for us there, even though they had a synagogue in town, and they had a fairly large Jewish population. I remember after we drove to Libya, then we came back, and came by the island of Jerba. Jerba has turned into a German colony. It's one hotel after another. But, over on one end of the island, there was a Jewish enclave, and we went over to see it. We were walking through it, and I saw all these kids. They were all blue-eyed, blondes. So, I asked one of the elders who was standing around, "Why all blue eyed blondes in this Jewish community?" He said, "It's very, very simple; every time the Vikings or anybody came by, they looted us, raped all the women, and killed all the men, so there they are." That explained a lot to me. I don't know what Tunisia is. It's a strange world, and yet as you may recall, Arafat was bombed there by the Israelis in later years. It just continued, and there were several deaths. Our policy there had to be not pro-Israeli. We had to always be very careful of this. I think Talcott understood this much better.



Q: From what you were getting from your impressions, and from your colleagues, what was your impression of Bourguiba at that time?

TANEN: That he had been very a strong personality who had just become forgetful. I can't even remember if he is still alive now. No, I think he just died.

Q: He died in January.TANEN: He was a nationalistic leader, very pro-American, pro the west, who had been married to a French woman, and then married a Tunisian lady. It had to be his way, or no way. The country had moved beyond him, and he couldn't grasp this. He never really realized that he was out. You still saw people in those days wearing the old Turkish hat, descendants of Turkish rulers. You still had a lot of Americans coming through to see where they had fought in WWII.

Q: Then, you left there when?

TANEN: 1973, and went to Paris.

Q: When did you leave? Were you there during the October war of 1973?

TANEN: No, I was there before that. It must have been early in 1973. I did meet a lot of the Arab league people there. I'm trying to think of this man's name who later became "the man." I just can't remember it now. He would sit up and talk at night of how they were so worried that Arafat would fail. They had their concerns because if they accepted Israel at all, then they had the rest of the Middle East to contend with. So, there was always this balance that they were trying to pull, and yet, these people who were talking to Arafat, and they were talking to him a lot, realized his weaknesses. We even had Palestinians on our staff at the embassy. They wanted to be associated with what they considered to be the right side, if you will, as far as their religion and background was concerned. I think that is really why they allowed Arafat to come in there. But, Arafat came in after I left.

Q: How did you find getting to know the movers and shakers within Tunisian society?

TANEN: Easy. It was an open society, from top to bottom. It was very easy to meet the minister, or to call on him, or become friends with him, university presidents, whatever they were. Our contacts were immense.

Q: How about contacts within universities, and students?



TANEN: Easy. I would be asked to speak at the university, or to meet with professors or students on any particular point of American policy at the time, particularly if it dealt with the Israeli situation, and try to give a balance of why the United States does X, Y, Z. In that kind of a way, there was more to do than you could do. You were very, very busy with contacts throughout the country. Further south you went, the less French was spoken. But, even there, you could always find groups. I spoke very little Arabic, so it didn't make much difference.

Q: Did they have much of a Berber population?

TANEN: Yes, they have quite a bit. They have centers there that obviously date from the time of the evacuation of the Arabs and the Muslims from Spain. For example, the Spanish Ambassador used to go out of town every month or two to a small village where they still had Andalusian music. He would sit up all night, listening to it. As I say, it was a country that seemed to me was always being occupied, for better or for worse, by west, east, north, south. You had Kairouan, for example, where they have the major Muslim mosque. It was conquered by the Beni Hillal, tribes that came over from Egypt. This was an area that had been rich with grass and trees, and so forth. But, when the Benny Hillel came, they brought goats, and finished it off. There was a desert there. There was an old Roman outpost. You had many, many Roman ruins there. You had some of the best Roman ruins in the world there.

Q: Well, in 1973, you were off to Paris.

TANEN: Well, Paris turned out to be kind of a fluke.Q: It makes sense.

TANEN: It turned out to make a lot of sense. I was assigned, originally, to go there as deputy PAO, and then they got somebody else, and they made me cultural attaché½. I had never been cultural attaché½, but I figured why not start at the top. In Paris, needless to say, that particular job, as far as I'm concerned, was one of the most important in the embassy. Burnett Anderson was our minister of public affairs. We were in the old Talleyrand building, which had been Harriman's office during the time of the Marshall Plan. The cultural office itself numbered about 60 people. I came in with the attitude that you are talking to an ignorant person. I am at your disposal. I said this to the staff and they immediately made sure I met everybody in town. I found out that I couldn't have made a better approach. If you come in and say you are a scholar, walls go up. But, what happened was that every wall fell down. I happened to have an outstanding staff of Americans and French. I worked the whole country, speaking, going. We had a very good Fulbright program there. I found out that at one point in the cabinet, the president, the prime minister, about eight or ten people had been to the United States, either on the Fulbright program or one of the other programs, and it made a difference. Not that they were pro-American, but that they were more open to Americans.



Q: Yes, and they understand where you are coming from. You were there from 1973 until when?

TANEN: 1977.

Q: What were the politics of that period in France?

TANEN: Communists were still in the background. You had the right wing still playing around.

Q: These are the Algerians.

TANEN: Algerians, yes. The 1968 business was still around. In France, everything is always in turmoil. As a matter of fact, in the embassy, the political section is divided up in such a way that one section is dealing only with right wing, and the other with the left. That's all they deal with. There was always scandal going on, money scandal, sex scandal, what have you. You had considerable concern about what was happening vis a vis the Algerians, Moroccans coming in, and the Senegalese were coming in, and how do you deal with them? America was still in Vietnam, and they were very anti about what we were doing in Vietnam. There was a lot of bad press dealing with that. At the same time, they were blooming culturally. There were still a lot of the old artists. They were still alive. There were actors, film people, classics; they were getting on in years, but they were still big names. Chirac was moving in. It was kind of a ten-ring circus going on, as far as watching all the players as they played.

Then, how did all this play on the United States? Well, there were two things; one is that you had Kissinger going in and out of town at that period, like a yo yo, trying to solve the Vietnam situation in some way. Then you had, in the United States, Watergate. The French, I would say, almost to a man and woman, were pro-Nixon. So, you would get into terrible harangues at the dinner table about "Why are you being so mean to Nixon, what he did was nothing. Look, what our president just did." Every time Kissinger came to town, he didn't come sulking in the back streets, shall we say. There were always two airplanes, 300 correspondents. It was Louis Quatorze arriving in town, and the French hated it, as well they should have. Everybody had to go to the airport every time he came in. The embassy had to be set up in such a way that we were taking over the Crillon Hotel and other places as centers for the press. Kissinger was not an easy man to understand, or get along with. It was something that was resented by many, many of the French.



It was our bicentennial, so culturally, our office was extremely involved. The whole idea of the bicentennial was that without the French, we wouldn't have won. At the same time, the French blame the fall of the monarchy on our revolution, not only the ideas, but because they went bankrupt, thanks to sending so much help. There was a lot of truth in all of this. But, the interesting thing was that we had two ambassadors there when I was with there. One of them was Jack Erwin, who was political, and spoke a little bit of French, but very much a gentleman. He got pulled out by Kissinger, and Ken Rush came in. Ken was all right. He was with Union Carbide, or one of the big companies. But, he had been in Germany before, and his interest in France was nil. The French really got involved in the bicentennial, I have to say. Every old nobleman considered our revolution his. I don't know, I'll mention some names, just for fun.

Q: Yes.

TANEN: Rene De Schoeblun, whom I got to know extremely well, is a direct descendant of Lafayette. Rene, during his period in government, at the fall of France, had been made minister of information. He married the daughter of Pierre LaValle. Piepers is a cemetery where the Lafayettes are buried, and during the occupation, he would have the Fourth of July celebration there. I think he went to Yale. His English was fluent. But, if you read the papers or any of the books that were written about what went on during the occupation, you realize that his wife was a spy in New York. She was a courier running American secrets back to Vichy government, and back to the Germans. So, she was not a welcome person. When Rene got wind of the bicentennial coming, and that we were inviting the vice president and his family to be honored guests during this Fourth of July, he wanted to be taken seriously. He befriended my wife, myself, and my daughter. He took us out to the Lafayette chateau, just outside of Paris. We went out there with the head of the New York public library.

Q: This was Rockefeller, by this time?TANEN: Yes, Nelson.

Q: Nelson Rockefeller.



TANEN: He was Vice President. I'll get into that in a minute. Anyhow, Rene decided I was the man to charm. We went out there, and the Lafayette papers are in this chateau. The chateau was lined with lime because Lafayette had tuberculosis. So, it was very warm. The papers are as white as the papers you see here on the desk. They are all over the floor, they are all over the walls. There are piles and piles. Lafayette died in his bed, and there are newspapers in his bed that are still white, not yellow. Rene is going through these papers, and he is writing the Lafayette history. He won't let anybody else read them. Scholars have been screaming about this for years. So, anyhow, we were out there two or three times, at least. You go into the dining room, or the living room of Rene's house, and here are all these pictures of Adolf Hitler and Pierre LaValle, and Rene. I don't want to say it's uncomfortable, but it certainly is amusing, to put it mildly. Rene is calling me on the phone, and can I do this and can I do that? I played it straight, and said, "I don't know." It just so happens that we had a dinner party at our house, and the marshal during the revolution, de Rochambeau, was the one who came over to help. We had this couple to the house, and I had gotten to know them fairly well, and they said they were descendants of de Rochambeau, the man of Yorktown. Anyhow, he was explaining that he is a descendant; he has the same name, and he has a chateau where the marshal had gone to retire after Yorktown. He asked if I would come out to see it. I went out to see it, and there was a room dedicated to the Centennial. It was a nice little chateau. They kept the caves, and around the chateau, where Rochambeau kept his troops when he returned. So, I became quite friendly with him. When Ambassador Rush said, "Well, what do we do if we invite the vice president? Rene Rochambeau wants to do this, that and the other thing." I said, "If we invite Rochambeau, we have a problem, because I had just read the dispatches of the day, that came out in 1945, where he had been condemned to death, pro-Nazi." Then came the papers from the New York law firm saying, "He is a great American, don't kill him." So, he was saved. But, I figured this is all we need, to have this. So, I told him about my good friend, Rochambeau. I said, "I don't know Nelson Rockefeller, but it seems to me that what we can do is have him fly in. We'll take him out to the chateau, and the Rochambeaus will have him for lunch with some of their neighbors; this would be a small luncheon, six, eight, ten, twelve people. They are willing to do this, if this interests you." The ambassador and everybody in the country team said, "Let's do it." So, I took out the security people, and we went to Rochambeau's place, where the helicopter could land, and the Rochambeaus were beside themselves in ecstasy. They really were a wonderful couple. Rochambeau is buried in the cemetery right next door. So, everything was all set. I told the Rochambeaus that they could invite whomever they wished. So, they invited the ambassador of Russia, Phyllis, myself and my daughter, because the Rockefeller's daughter was the same age. So, it was going to be a nice family dinner.



What I neglected to tell the Rochambeaus was that there would be security people out there who would tear the place apart, putting in all the telecommunications. I also neglected to tell them that he doesn't travel alone. There would be press up the wazoo, and they would have to feed everybody. If that wasn't enough, the Gendarmerie sent a force cavalry and everything else to patrol the place, to be sure that nobody got to Nelson Rockefeller. Rochambeau had to feed all of them as well. Today, we still laugh about all of this. Anyhow, the great day came, and he lands. We have this marvelous lunch; 20 people, and fed all these hundreds of people, and it was all over. Nelson had a marvelous time. The next day, he visited the president, and did a few other things, and then he left. So, it was a great success. Then, the phone calls began saying that these people are not descendants of the Rochambeaus, that they are really descendants of the Rochambeau's cook. Rochambeau had no children, and he came back and married his cook. These are the children of the cook. All kinds of Rochambeaus came out of the woodwork; counts, dukes, whatever, saying they were descendants. It was a very French moment.

Q: A real force in France, more than almost anywhere else, maybe to a lesser degree in England, are the intellectuals. As cultural attaché, you must have been up to your neck in intellectuals. How did you find dealing with them? How did we see them at that time?

TANEN: With the intellectuals, we had what we called an American center; it was the Dragoon center, which had been there for years and years. We had a young man running it who was very up-to-date, as far as authors, films, videos, that sort of thing. Amazingly enough, many intellectuals would go to that center. At the same time, he was putting on programs, which were not critical of the United States, but they showed some ugly sides of the United States. That is what made it popular in Paris and unpopular in USIA. That's why the intellectuals went there. Then, we had programs from there that were going out to the country. You know how Paris is: the universities are on the outside. The communities that you really want to reach are outside, because these are the student movements that are always causing problems. The reason they are outside is because the French don't want them in. I found, as far as modern America was concerned, in the 1970s, these intellectuals were very much on the same wave length. It was easy to talk to them, as long as you were honest with them. They, I think, were more critical of us, somewhat because of Nixon, but also because of Vietnam. But, as long as they felt that you were presenting your government's point of view on Vietnam, which didn't necessarily mean you were pro what was going on there, it was okay.



When I give talks these days, I say that the most difficult thing, of course, for any diplomat is that he is not representing the United States, he is representing the administration. How do you separate the two, and get your point of view across as an administration spokesman? I don't know, but somehow or other, in your own mind, if you don't separate it, you are gone. They know it. That was our problem there: Vietnam. Also, the other problem there was Nixon. I was very anti-Nixon. I had to be very careful until he finally got booted out not to say too much, because the French loved him. This was true of the intellectuals as well. Q: This is a time when we were thrown out of South Vietnam, and the north won. Was there a certain amount of rejoicing within the French ranks, saying, "Well, you might have thought you were better than us, but by God, you had the same thing happen?"

TANEN: There certainly was. There is no question about it. There was a tremendous, "I told you so." There was a lot of that. Then, you have to remember that as you always do in France, you have a continual influx of Americans; officials and unofficials. There were a lot of big names coming through at all times, receiving honors, and this kind of thing. I did a lot of work during the bicentennial. I spent days traveling around talking to groups and had three or four things on the Fourth of July. I had a driver and was traveling continually. In parades, the outflow of warmth toward the United States, because of the bicentennial, was overwhelming. This was every area, and I went to every area.

Q: By the time you left in 1977, was there the feeling that Vietnam was behind us?

TANEN: No. There was a feeling that Vietnam almost destroyed the United States, and the French felt that. I may be overreacting, but a lot of French felt this way. That whatever we were, we had allowed ourselves to get into this position. So, they were critical in that way. I still go back to France every year. I spend a couple months there, because I find that I have more friends in France than I have anywhere else. I consider the French to be among the most difficult people I've ever had to deal with. Somebody said to me, "How do you get along with them?" I said, "The first thing you do is you don't take them seriously. If you don't take them seriously..." But, for me, personally, I loved it there. I used to walk to work and say "They're paying me for this; they're not paying me very much." At the same time, as well as being cultural attaché, soon after I got there, they made me deputy public affairs officer. I was the only one to ever carry the two titles. Also, soon after I got there, or a year or two before I left, I was promoted to class one, which meant that I had gone from GS-13, or whatever it was, to class one, which is now something else. Q: Super grade or something.

TANEN: This was before I was 50. I was absolutely amazed. So, I have nothing but warm feelings for what went on there, and have to say, for my career in general.



Q: On the cultural side, did you find yourself in kind of a war with the French intellectual cultural establishment, saying, "We have a culture too?"

TANEN: No. That I found in the 1950s. But, I certainly never found it in the 1970s. I'll tell you another bi-line though. As cultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup>, I was co-chair of the Fulbright Foundation. I remembered that when I was there in the 1950s, the Fulbright Foundation budget was three million dollars. When I was there this time as co-chairman, there was a Frenchman in as well. Each side put up \$400,000, that was it. You had the same staff, the same building. You were sending three or four people a year to the United States. It was nothing compared to what used to go on. While I was there, I worked with another man named Martin Ackerman, who was our senior cultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup> in the agency, and who was a man who before retirement had gone to school in France and Germany. We developed a system, whereby we would go to, say IBM, and say, "You're sending people to the United States every year, how do you pick them, and can the Fulbright board help you?" What we did was to set it up so that some of these big companies would pay the Fulbright board, send their people to the United States, and pay the Fulbright board. You would set up committees to review all of this. Also, as cultural attaché<sup>1/2</sup>, you were on every conceivable board. So, you never had a moment alone. While I was there, I never had a Frenchman come up to me, as they had, in Senegal and elsewhere, saying, "You are a newfound country, you don't have a culture." That was finished.

Q: There is the obvious thing where America's movies were, I guess always had been, quite popular in France, I would say. It used to drive the French nuts, because they have the next largest film industry in the western world. TANEN: There was always that, and there was always the problem of why don't we do something about the Motion Picture Association of America, and try to get them to send fewer films to France, or why are they only showing these, or why don't they show more French films in the United States? All I can say is the French love American films.

Q: What sort of things did, particularly in, you might say, the flag culture, the hawk culture level, were particularly interesting to the French from America, at that time?

TANEN: The contemporary arts, music. You had Philip Glass, and so forth- (end of tape)

Q: You were saying, the music school of Versailles...



TANEN: Nadia Bollinger was passiö½. Remember, this is the period when the Centre Beaubourg was being built. They put in the school of music, and it was based upon the kind of music that Philip Glass and the others were developing. There were more interested in having American artists. While I was there, an American artist, I can't remember which one, became a member of the academy. They started giving more and more medals of Arts and Letters to Americans, from authors to, I must admit, people like me. They gave me one. I was the only one in the embassy, at that point, to have ever gotten one. That was another story, because you had to go through the Department of State for clearance. But, anyhow, there was more of a warm feeling toward the various arts here. Film, of course, was always a big thing. But, then when you start getting into some of the video and so forth, they were really just beginning, and we were much further along. We closed the American Cultural Center in Paris, which I was sorry to see happen, but maybe it was a normal thing, I don't know. It had served its purpose, I guess.

Q: During this period, who was the president of France?

TANEN: Giscard d'Estaing

Q: Did you get any feel for how he dealt with the United States?

TANEN: Yes, for mysterious reasons, I got to know him. The reason I got to know him had to do with horses. His brother-in-law and sister-in-law had a place in the country next to his. I used to go out there with my daughter to ride for the weekend. He would come by, and we would talk about what was going on. He was very pro-American, and still is, much more so than some of the others that I've gotten to know there. He was not afraid of America. He was not afraid of being critical of America. He had been to the United States, and he knew where we were coming from. I think, with the French, frankly, as with any culture, if you respect theirs, then they are bound to respect yours.

Q: Well, was there concern at that time about... My French is awful, let's see; Le Defi American; the American challenge?

TANEN: There were books out on that.

Q: I mean, basically, it was really business.



TANEN: It was a business thing. I can remember sitting on country team meetings discussing fighter planes. Whether the mirage and the F-16 were the hot planes of the moment, the F-15, and the competition going on between the two, to say nothing of Boeing and the Airbus. I equate it with something that happened in the United States, and I equated it then with this. There was a feeling in the United States at one point that the Japanese knew how to do everything better than we did. You knew that with all these books coming out and everything else, life would go on, and it would be proven that the United States was doing its thing, and the Japanese theirs. It was fine. There was no problem. That's, I think, what happened in France. That's the feeling I was getting from the French; they had to go through certain motions because they always have to go through certain motions. But, they were not overly concerned, shall we say. Now there is a difference because of McDonald's restaurants, banks, airplane sales.

Q: Well, I was wondering whether you were feeling, at that time, a certain leakage from France, say, to the United States of some of the particularly business-oriented, the best and the brightest in the business world, because of the constraints within the French economy?

TANEN: Educational system.

Q: Educational system, but at the higher level for Harvard Business School, or Wharton, or the equivalent thereof. But, also their constraints within the society. You can't maneuver the way you can, say, in the United States.

TANEN: I got called in fairly often to talk to parents who didn't know what to do with their children. Some of them were very high up. There was a lot of feeling that in the United States you could be what you wanted to be without having gone to one of the universities in France. There is still the old boy system in France. It still exists, and it's not going to change right away. So, there was, at certain levels, and the students and their parents, there was more of a feeling of, "If we could get our son to go to Harvard Business School, get him to the United States, he might do better than if he came here." They are still doing things there in the same old way. So, there was already sort of a melding. I think, today, when I look at what has happened to France, you're better off if you've got a certain kind of a name, and you've gone to the Haut Ecole, than if you don't. It's a class society. It certainly was then.

Q: Well, you left there in 1977, wither?



TANEN: My personal feeling is I did more good for my country when I got out, than when I was in. I came out in 1977, and went to the senior seminar for a year. For some personal reasons, I got out. Whether I would have made ambassador or not, I'll never know, but wherever I would have made ambassador wouldn't have been where I wanted to go. So, it wouldn't have made any difference. I started working for the Asia society. I was working for the India program. This program was something Kissinger had started. I'm not a great admirer of Kissinger, but what he did was to say that in certain countries, you can't always deal country-to country, officially. You have to do it at a different level, which I fully agree with. He set up the Indo-American Commission. That had four sub-commissions. One of the subcommissions was Education and Culture. The money for it came partly from the Department of State, very little, and partly from the government involved, India, and partly from PL-480 funds, and whatever you could raise. When I took it over, it was a very small operation. I took it over in 1978. What I saw was my entire Foreign Service career: "How do you get Americans to become more aware of other people's culture. If you can do it on a bilateral basis, you've got it made." Along the lines of the Kissinger thinking, there are a certain number of countries in the world that could cause more problems than anybody else. They are not the most underdeveloped, nor are they necessarily the most developed. The Soviet Union disappeared, and then you had Russia. China is a problem, Japan, and so forth. Those are countries you are dealing with all the time. If you could work this kind of thing that I was trying to do out with countries such as India, Pakistan, Brazil, the Philippines, Argentina, countries which I consider to be second level countries, some of which have atomic weapons. Certainly, they are powers in their own areas. When they cause problems, the United States has to go rushing in and try to straighten things out. This India thing just fell into my lap. With a staff of three people, we built it up. I moved it out of the Asia society, and we built it up into something quite spectacular.

How did it work? It had a board made up of Indians, appointed by the prime minister. It had a board in the United States of Americans. Pat Moynihan was very much involved.Q: He was senator from New York, and had been ambassador.



TANEN: Yes, and he was interested in India, particularly. So, I had a very strong American board, headed by Franklin Long, at a certain point, and then Jack Hubbard, who later became ambassador to India. On the Indian side, I had some outstanding people. We used to meet once a year, alternating between the countries, and come up with projects. The funding for it from the American side had been in the State Department when I first started, then passed to USIA. It was \$400,000 a year. Out of that \$400,000, I was expected to pay myself, my staff, administrative expenses, plus a certain amount of programming. Most of the programming money was PL-480 funds, which I could use to send people. That came to about a million, to a half million dollars a year. Then, the Indian government put in about another half million dollars. In other words, if I were sending people from here to India, the Indian government would have to pick up the cost in India. If we were sending them from India here, then we would pick them up from USIA or PL-480, or I would raise the money. I was able to do it, and raised quite a bit. It turned out to be an enormous program. Everybody wondered how it worked, especially when I would get called in by the Department or USIA. They would say, "We don't understand how you have been doing all these things." We had people on television, we had teachers training in all sorts of ways, electronically and other ways. We had doctors, lawyers, dentists. We had everything you could possibly imagine coming back and forth, and sometimes a few hundred people coming each way.

I said to them, "The way it works is, you leave me alone. I can make it work. If I may say so, you should be doing this with some of the other countries, because look what you are getting for \$400,000. I have to go here and raise \$500,000, \$200,000, from somebody else, and I can do it. So, the entire program ran on about three million dollars a year. I worked very closely with the embassy there, and the Indian embassy in Washington. The whole trick was keeping everybody informed of what you are doing and why you are doing it, and making each side feel that they were getting precisely what they wanted. If I do say so myself, I'm really astounded at what it accomplished. Mrs. Gandhi was involved and the Festival of India was organized in the U.S.. This thing turned out to be a monster. We ended up with 35 major exhibitions in the United States and 135 other types of programs.

Q: Good God.

TANEN: We had television programs, we had music programs, we had universities putting on all kinds of things, we had books being published. It was enormous. The whole thing ran around twenty-three million dollars, of which the Indian government put up a considerable amount of the money. They went on to do it later on in England and in France, Moscow, elsewhere. We were supposed to put on something similar in India, which we tried to do, but ran into problems.

Q: What sort of problems did you run into?



TANEN: The basic problem was to try to get people in the United States to spend money in India. That was number one. Then it was Mrs. Gandhi getting killed, and her son being killed. Next, the head of museums in India who said, "If we are sending our best Indian art to the United States, then we want you to send your best American art here." I said, "Fine." This was whatever it was, the American artists of the day, and American artists of yesterday. No, he wanted Picasso, and wanted this, that and the other. I said, "We have a problem, the museums are not going to send their best Picasso to India. I can get away with sending the American art, but if I have to send European art, then I have other problems." Well, the Philadelphia museum helped me out and sent some stuff, but I couldn't get the major American exhibit there, because this guy refused it. I had the money for it, and the art. I had about 80 pieces of art ready to go, and all paid for. This son of a bitch turned these down. They were American. There was also a large Indian group in India backing us up.Q: This was always one of the problems when dealing with India, isn't it? The bureaucracy and the ability of people within the bureaucracy to dig in their heels and show their power.

TANEN: It was a nightmare. To give you somewhat of an example: Reagan was president in 1986, and the National Gallery here was having a major exhibition on India. Major pieces were missing because the Director of Museums of India refused to send them.

Q: What was the occasion? Was it just now is the time to do India?

TANEN: Now is the time to do India. The idea in my mind and others was: "Let's make it big in such a way that people are going to be inundated with India." We had zoos involved. We had children, we had picnics, we had food festivals. I can't even imagine how we did it. This was four people on my staff, all overworked and underpaid. I can remember there were four or five pieces that were supposed to arrive to the National Gallery. This guy in India said, "I'm not sending them. I don't care what the prime minister says, I'm not sending them." So, the exhibit was opening, and prime minister Gandhi's young son was supposed to fly in.

Q: Rajiv, yes.



TANEN: To open this whole festival on the White House lawn, dinner that night at the White House, the whole thing. He came in with the pieces on his plane. That's how close it was. I can remember standing with the staff on the hill overlooking all of this and Rajiv arriving and Reagan saying, "I now declare the festival open." Then, someone said, "You better look in the east, because a star just rose. If there was ever a miracle, this is it." Anyhow, I hired somebody to put this together into a book. I thought it would be worthwhile. Then, I found out that there were so many people involved, that no matter what I said good about somebody, there were too many contradictions. So, I decided to forget it. I want to make friends, not lose friends on this thing. Anyway, the festival was a success.

We continued the program up until three years ago, at which point the Indian government fell, the American ambassador in India decided he didn't need us anymore. By the way, up until then, we had ambassadors that thought we were the greatest thing going.

Q: Who was the ambassador?

TANEN: Frank Wisner, who I'm sure you interviewed.

Q: Somebody did, but I didn't.



TANEN: Anyhow, Frank was an old friend. I figured if anybody wasn't going to do me in, it was Frank. He did me in. USIA was falling apart, and Newt Gingrich and the whole thing. So, it fell apart on both sides, and we closed down and quit. So, it's gone. But, the archives are now in a warehouse in New Jersey. Somebody I hope, someday, will write it up, because I think it's the way to go. Now, having made a success out of India, and while doing India, I then began getting other countries. Everybody wanted to duplicate India, but I couldn't for India. I had the vice president, I had Secretary of State Shultz, I had everybody going with me. On the India side, I had the highest. You can't do it on that side, without the highest. So, the foreign minister of Indonesia came to me, and asked if I could do it. I said, "Sure." So, I opened up a second office, hired a second staff, and started working with Indonesia. We did an Indonesia festival in 1992, which was pretty good, but nowhere near the scope of the India one. But, it was the same idea; wherever we are doing it, let's have a lot. At the same time, I then had the Rockefeller foundation ask me if I could do something with Mexico, and three cities here. It was one exhibit, three thousand years in Mexican art. We did it in San Antonio and Los Angeles at the Metropolitan Museum. What they wanted me to do was to bring in subsidiary programs around the three thousand years of Mexican art, bringing in the Hispanic communities. I had a certain amount of experience in Los Angeles and elsewhere, so we ended up in those three cities, doing some pretty spectacular things. This to such an extent that, for the first time, we were able to get Mexican-Americans on the board of the LA county museum. It did a lot of good. Nobody will ever hear about it, but it did. At the same time, I had UNESCO and UNDP coming at me saying, "What can you do? We want you to go to Morocco." They sent me to Morocco to try to do something. The Greeks hired me to try to do something, and we did a little bit there. I suddenly found myself in business with a lot of countries, not making any money, but having one hell of a time.

I realize that this is what is needed here. We have always been such a diverse society, and we've become such a complicated society. I'm talking American businesses, as well as diplomats. You can't just go into a meeting and discuss business with somebody from another culture. You have to know something of their culture. This is one way of doing it. It's through their religion, through their language, through their art, through their history, whatever it may be. But, know something about it. So, then I went to various groups and said, "Now, what you should do is have the same kind of a thing that I have been talking about for France. You need to know something about the United States. You are sending people over there, to work in the United States, not necessarily diplomats, but whatever." They would say, "Well, they know about New York." But, they may be doing business in Detroit, or in the south. You have to know where you are going. You have to know the kinds of people you are dealing with. So, I almost started something there, and I may still end up doing something for them. So, I've got a ten-ring circus going. I couldn't have done it without the Foreign Service. At the same time, I feel that I've done more in the 20 years since I got out.



Q: I'm sure you have. When dealing with the Indians, I would have thought the Indian bureaucracy, not just the museum director, would have been impossible to work with.

TANEN: It was a nightmare. I'll tell you how it worked. I used to say, when I first started, I took four trips a year to India. They would say, "Why are you going so often?" I would say, "Well, I have to go over there to answer my own telegrams." As things progressed, I'd say, "I'm going over to answer my one faxes." But, what I found was in various ministries, the chief secretary, generally speaking, was a guy who could get things done. It wasn't the minister, but the secretary who could get things done. I developed a crew of people in India. They were moving from one ministry to the other, but they were always the secretaries.

Q: When you say secretary, you're not talking about a typist secretary, you're talking about the equivalent to an administrative assistant.

TANEN: Administrative assistant, yes. You have a minister who is political, and the secretary is the career man. It is a civil servant, if you will. I had a whole school of those. We were on the phone, or I would go over. I found that if I told them I was coming in on Tuesday and need answers to the following, when I got to the airport, I had the answers. So, when I got to the hotel, the answers were there. Then, I could start working on some other things. That's how it worked. I made it work by going all the time. I can remember the talks I had with USIA people. They would say, "We really don't understand how you can do all these things." I said, "I make them happen. It's not happening by accident, it's not happening because I want them to happen." Quite honestly, I also get a lot of help from the embassy. If I can't get there, I'll call somebody at the embassy I know, the PAO, the CAO, whoever it is, and say, "I'm having a problem," and sometimes they can make a phone call.

Q: Well, did you find that there were sort of almost two levels with India, when you were dealing with it? At the political level, relations had been pretty frosty for a long time, particularly the period you are dealing with. They were cozying up to the Soviet Union.

TANEN: Oh, boy, were they ever.

Q: It kind of struck me as being kind of peculiar, because the Soviets really didn't have that much to offer. Of course, there was sort of the feeling that came through the Gandhis. They sort of inherited the British, maybe out of native too, superiority to the Americans. Of course, we feel superior, and we preach to each other. Anyhow, it's not the greatest mix in the world.

TANEN: No, it's a nightmare.



Q: But, did you find you can go below that level and make something like this happen?

TANEN: No, I think with India, you go above that level. Where I could make it work, there was a very good friend, and still a good friend. This was secretary to the prime minister. When I say secretary, civil service secretary. I could call him on the phone, and he could get to the prime minister. When our subcommission meetings were in India, the foreign minister would sit in, but sometimes the prime minister. They took it much more seriously than the Americans did, because they saw me, in a sense, their cultural door to the United States. They could get things done here that they couldn't get done any other way. It would take them forever to get them done, whereas we would do them within a year; we would have results. So, if I dealt too low a level, I was dead. I had to deal right at the top.

Q: This got you artifacts on the prime minister plane.

TANEN: It was a miracle. Yet, Carter Brown and Felipe DeMontabello and a woman in in Philadelphia, all the major museums who had stuff from India, were willing to put up ten, fifteen, twenty works of art, send them to India, and pay for it. Unheard of. Then, this guy over there turned it off. But, we've got other things over there: dance groups, film, exhibitions, I sent a lot of artists over. I even sent Indian tribe people over, artisans. You name it, we did it. It was weird.

Q: Did you find that after doing this, from your sounding, the cultural ties kept going?

TANEN: Within India and here too. I'm still asked to do things sometimes for the Met, or it got them invited to things, if nothing else. This isn't so much in government, because government has changed so here. One of the men I worked most closely with is coming here as an Indian ambassador to the United States. I know he is going to ask me what I can do to restart the thing. It's like Humpty Dumpty again. There's no way you could start this whole thing again. Yet, what I wanted to see, and I talked to Charles Wick, and others about it, is don't make it this big, and don't make it this complicated. But, do it with the Philippines, do it with Brazil, do it with some of these second-tier countries. Let's see what you can get done. I told him I would help him, that I would donate my time, whatever it takes. I feel strongly about this.



I'm now working, believe it or not, with the Mongolians. How does that work? Well, through India. The in people I worked with in India, the Mongolian ambassador to the United Nations said he would like to do something. He also said, "I don't have any money or anything, can anybody advise me?" So I was recommended. I met with him two or three years ago now. So, all he wants to do is present Mongolia in the United States in a cultural way, exhibitions, singing and dancing, doing some things in Central Park. This is very small kinds of business. So, I said, "Of course, I'm not going to do all the work, but if you have somebody to do all the work, hustling around, I'll work with him." So, he did have a young Indian man. He hired him, and I worked as a consultant. We are doing all these things. Where am I getting the money to do all these things? My same old contacts. The Rockefeller Foundation, I still know the people, the Asian Cultural Council, I still know them. I can get them ten here, fifty there, one hundred here. That is how we are getting the money. He is very pleased about that. So, he says, "Well, how do I pay you?" I said, "I would like to go to Mongolia with my wife, " so he is sending me over there. In the mean time, he is paying me with different bottles of Genghis Khan vodka, which will take the paint right off the ceiling. But, I don't care, because I feel that this is what I'm all about, quite honestly. It's thanks to this career, whatever it was.

Q: Were you noticing, while you were doing the India thing, the growing Indian community in the United States?

TANEN: Of course.

Q: This is sort of, almost very quietly, India has become a major contributor of immigrants to the United States. We are doing very well, thank you.

TANEN: Especially the Silicon Valley. The hours I wasted talking to the Indians in this country who say, "Gee, what you are doing is fantastic, do more of it." I will say, "But, I can't do it without money. Why don't you guys help me raise money?" Silicon Valley, for example, when we closed down, I took my chairman, Tom Pritzker, head of Hyatt Hotels, who is an India lover. Tom has given lots of money to us and the Indians. I took him to Silicon Valley, and we met with a whole bunch of Indians.

Q: Is that the culture, do you say?



TANEN: They talk good, though. They promised me checks in the mail, and I'm still waiting. But, I have dealt a lot with the Indian community, and have gone to Indian meetings all over the United States, and given my speech. Nothing. They were very pleased. The other thing I found was that people now are saying, "Oh, yes, the success of India." Somebody will say, "He did it, she did it, they did it." I said, "Fine." Anybody they want, they say they did it. It certainly wasn't your money that did it.

Q: Did you get at all involved in Bollywood, and all that?

TANEN: I used to, but not anymore. One of our board members was a great director from India. That is one of the most interesting things, which is to take the two sides, and each side had it's own idea of what should be done. To try to meld their desires into something that would satisfy them, and which I could do. They could come up with ideas that I knew I couldn't do, that I could never find the money for. An example, archeology. I'm seeing Mrs. Moynihan this afternoon. She was on our board for a while. There is a group here in the United States that makes model airplanes. It shoots pictures of archeological sites. You can't get to these archeological sites any other way, unless you have a helicopter, which will costs you a lot of money, or a balloon. With a \$250 model airplane, a little putt-putt, with a camera on it, and remote control, you swoop in and go, click, click, click. Well, we started making these things in India. They started shooting archeological sites with these things. Who in the hell would come up with an idea like that?

Q: Well, that's great. Well, Ted, I think maybe we can draw this to a close here.

TANEN: Okay.

Q: I really appreciate it this. It's a fascinating topic.

TANEN: I felt I had to get all this off my chest.

Q: I'm delighted. I'll explain how it goes. Thank you very much.

End of interview